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THE THEOLOGY OF RICHARD HOOKER
IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE MAGISTERIAL REFORMATION



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THE THEOLOGY OF
RICHARD HOOKER IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE
MAGISTERIAL REFORMATION

W. J. TORRANCE KIRBY



PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Editor's Foreword

Though the term has long stood among historians, the Elizabethan Settlement is an ambitious designation. As often as not the so-called settlement was an uneasy truce among parties who, without the arbitration forced upon them by one of the most determined and resourceful rulers of modern Europe, would have carried through whatever one-sided program each faction imagined to be God's own reform. Accommodation and compromise seemed to be the only viable way of getting to a new set of political, diplomatic, and military conditions in which this or that party could assert its program. This mode of living—this sanctioned stalling for a more propitious moment—worked. That was the thing about the Elizabethan working arrangement: it worked.

The outstanding figure who saw and articulated the positive vision animating Elizabethan theology, piety, and ecclesiastical polity was, of course, Richard Hooker. He was not alone in this endeavor, but spoke for a broad spectrum of practices held together by a relatively few but firm convictions about the reform of the Catholic Church and the nature of political responsibility. In his articulated vision, Hooker had something to which all but the extremes on either side could appeal. He also had something to which almost every party could object. For example, he made the case for episcopacy, but in doing so relied on understandings of the authority of Scripture that left both literalists and their opposites unsatisfied.

The present group of essays by Professor Kirby examines the more technically theological components that animated the reforms of polity which Hooker advocated. Hooker's theological lineage includes Calvin as well as other continental reformers. Inevitably the influence between the continent reformers and the English—and Scottish, in the case of Knox—reformers was mutual. Transplanted into English soil, Calvin's and others' theology was shown to be adaptive; but the Elizabethan arrangement cannot be understood unless more serious attention is given to Calvin's influence on

Hooker than has been given in the past. Professor Kirby's study does just that, and in doing so he shows a nicely ligamented wrist for the charitable cudgel wielding one would wish from subsequently bland and distant observers of English theological reform.

Torrance Kirby is professor of church history at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

David Willis

Abbreviations

See bibliography for publishing information.

<i>ACL</i>	<i>A Christian Letter of certaine English Protestantes</i>
<i>CO</i>	<i>Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Corpus Reformatorum</i>
<i>FLE</i>	All references to Hooker's works are taken from the authoritative <i>Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker</i> and cite volume, page, and line numbers.
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
<i>Just.</i>	<i>A Learned Discourse of Justification</i>
<i>Lawes</i>	References to <i>Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie</i> give book, chapter, and section followed by the volume, page, and the line numbers of the Folger edition.
<i>LW</i>	<i>Luther's Works</i>
<i>OER</i>	<i>Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation</i>
<i>Pride</i>	<i>A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride</i>
<i>RHC</i>	<i>Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community</i>
<i>SRH</i>	<i>Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works</i>
<i>STC</i>	<i>A Short-Title Catalogue . . . 1475–1640</i>
<i>WA</i>	Martin Luther, <i>Werke</i> . Kritische Gesamtausgabe

Preface

The three essays included here explore certain aspects of Richard Hooker's theological discourse and method within the context of currents of thought prevalent in the so-called "Magisterial Reformation." Their chief aim is to extend the proposal first made in my book *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (1990) that the widely received interpretation of Hooker's thought according to the paradigm of the Anglican *via media* is essentially anachronistic and therefore fundamentally inaccurate.¹ Much of the critical literature published since the mid- to late-nineteenth century has worked from the assumption that Hooker was one of the original progenitors of Anglicanism and was therefore seeking to define a theological middle way between Reformed orthodoxy and Tridentine catholicism. For example, in his recent introduction to the preface of the *Lawes* in the Folger Library Commentary on Hooker's Works (1993) William Haugaard portrays the Church of England in the late sixteenth century as the "crucible for an emerging Anglicanism" (*FLE*, 6[1]:2). In this account Haugaard refers to "a recognition among some contemporaries that the English church represented a kind of Protestant *tertium quid* among established European churches, whose character suggested the possibility of rapprochement with Roman Catholic as well as fellow Protestant churches" (*FLE*, 6[1]:6–7). As the preeminent defender of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, Hooker is held up as the proponent of this incipient *via media*, and thus his theology is represented as bearing the mark of a distinctively "Anglican" approach with respect to both content and method. In a similar vein, Lee Gibbs portrays Hooker's theology as "Thomistic," and means thereby that Hooker set out to "close the breach opened by

¹ This thesis has recently been taken up in a very clear and penetrating study of Hooker's theology by Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), to which readers are referred.

the magisterial Reformation and maintained by the disciplinarians between reason and revelation, nature and grace" (*FLE*, 6[1]:124).² According to this interpretation, to pursue the Anglican middle way is ipso facto to eschew the doctrinal norms of the magisterial reformers.

Is this portrait of Hooker's putative *via media* Anglicanism sustainable? There are good grounds for scepticism, chief among them Hooker's own explicit declarations concerning his apologetic intent. As I have argued elsewhere, Hooker casts the argument of the *Lawes* as an irenical appeal to the hearts and minds of the disciplinarian-Puritan opponents of the Elizabethan Settlement.³ Throughout his discourse Hooker speaks directly to the theological assumptions of those who seek a "further reformation" of the Church of England: "Thinke not that ye reade the words of one, who bendeth him selfe as an adversarie against the truth which ye have alreadie embraced; but the words of one, who desireth even to embrace together with you the self same truth" (*Lawes*, preface, 1.3; 1:3.1–6). To win *conscientious* acceptance of the settlement it was essential to Hooker's strategy to show the consistency of the English version of Reform with continental standards of doctrinal orthodoxy. From the perspective of Hooker's apologetics, the debate between conformist and disciplinarian critics of the settlement is in effect a struggle over the interpretation of what exactly constitutes "reformed orthodoxy" in England. The aim of the present study is to explore this struggle in three distinct contexts. First, Hooker's treatment of natural law raises important questions concerning the authority of reason in theological discourse. The aim is to compare his thinking directly with other magisterial reformers to determine whether appeals to the natural law tradition and related claims on behalf of the natural knowledge of God can be reconciled with mainstream reformed thinking. Second, we will examine Hooker's dependence on the philosophical discourse and traditional cosmology of Christian Neoplatonism to inquire whether this necessarily compromises his commitment to reformed doctrine as some have suggested. Finally, in the third part, we will review Hooker's appeal to the authority of patristic sources—notably the Christological formulations of the four great ecumenical councils of the Early Church—within the context of the Elizabethan struggle to define the parameters of a genuinely "reformed" account of the doctrines of salvation and of the Church.

I am deeply grateful to all my friends and colleagues at the Center of Theo-

² This is essentially the position of W. David Neelands, "Scripture, Reason and 'Tradition,'" in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 165, ed. Arthur S. McGrade (Tempe, Ariz.: 1997), p. 80. Hereafter cited as *RHC*.

³ See my essay "Richard Hooker as an Apologist of the Magisterial Reformation in England," *RHC*, pp. 222–225.

logical Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey for their fellowship, help, and encouragement over the past two years. I wish to thank both the present and former Directors of the Center, Dr. Daniel Hardy and Dr. Wallace Alston, for all their kindness. I am especially indebted to Dr. William Lazareth, Associate Director of the Center of Theological Inquiry, and to Avihu Zakai, Niels Gregersen, and Victor Nuovo for their extensive and helpful comments and criticisms on the manuscript. Many conversations with members of the center and others have contributed greatly to my thinking on the matter of these essays. I would like to thank in particular George Hunsinger, Edward Dowey, Paul Rorem, Angelo di Berardino, Alexander McKelway, Anthony Ugolnik, and Wayne Hankey. Of course all errors and omissions are entirely my own responsibility. I am grateful to Professor David Willis for considering this piece for publication in the *Reformed Theology and History* series. Thanks are especially due to Maureen Montgomery, Mary Beth Lewis, Kathi Morley, Linda Sheldon, and all the staff at the Center of Theological Inquiry who contribute so much to the common enterprise of *fides quaerens intellectum*. Finally I wish to dedicate this little book to my wife Margaret and to Elizabeth and Kate.

W. J. Torrance Kirby
McGill University
Easter 2000

I

The Context of Reformation Thought: The Influence of the Magisterial Reformers on Richard Hooker's Discourse on Natural Law¹

Richard Hooker's theory of natural law has long been the subject of controversy. In his famous pulpit exchange with the eminent Puritan divine Walter Travers in the Temple Church at the Inns of Court,² and later in *A Christian Letter of certaine English Protestantes*,³ Hooker was accused of promoting "Romishe doctrine" and "the darknesse of schoole learning" in his attempt to maintain intellectual continuity with the natural law tradition (*FLE*, 4:23.10–24.8; 4:65.1). His contemporary critics sought to impugn his theory as incompatible with the doctrine of the Thirty-Nine Articles of

¹ This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics held in Cincinnati in January, 1997.

² See Egil Grislis, "Introduction to Commentary on Tractates and Sermons: §iv. *The Controversy with Travers*," in the *Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, 6 vols., ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977–1993), vol. 5, ed. Laetitia Yeandle and Egil Grislis (1990), pp. 641–648. Hereafter cited as *FLE*. Travers's chief work is a defense of a scripturally based form of church polity published under the title *Ecclesiasticae Disciplinae et Anglicanae Ecclesiae ab illa Aberrationis plena e verbo Dei et dilucida Explicatio* and translated by Thomas Cartwright as *A Full and plaine declaration of ecclesiastical discipline owt off the word off God and off the declininge off the churche of England from the same*; both (Heidelberg: M. Schirat, 1574) [STC, 24184].

³ *A Christian Letter of certaine English Protestantes, vnfayned favourers of the present state of religion, authorized and professed in England: unto that Reverend and learned man Mr. R. Hoo[ker] requiring resolution in certayne matters of doctrine (which seeme to overthrowe the foundation of Christian Religion, and of the Church among us) expresslie contayned in his five bookees of Ecclesiasticall Policie* (hereafter cited as *ACL*; Middelburg, Holland: R. Schilders, 1599) [STC, 13721] was the only attack on the *Lawes* published in Hooker's lifetime. The complete text, together with Hooker's marginal annotations, is reprinted in *FLE*, vol. 4, ed. John Booty (1982), pp. 1–79.

Religion⁴ of the Church of England as well as with such standards of sixteenth-century Protestant orthodoxy as Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and the confessions of "the best reformed churches" on the continent.⁵ Since the mid-nineteenth century, commentators on Hooker's thought have commonly allowed the truth of these accusations largely owing to their consistency with the prevailing hypothesis of the so-called Anglican *via media*.⁶ This interpretation of Hooker's thought rests on the assumption that the doctrine of the Church of England occupies a theological middle ground between

⁴ See the introduction to *ACL, FLE*, 4:7.24–9.14:

Shew unto us and all English Protestantes, your owne true meaning, and how your wordes in divers thinges doe agree with the doctrine established among us. And that not onelie for avoyding of offence given to many godlie and religious Christians: but also that Atheistes, Papistes, and other hereticques, be not incouraged by your so harde and so harsh stile (beating as it were, as we verilie thinke, against the verie heart of all true christian doctrine, professed by her Majestie and the whole state of this Realme) to despise and set light by, her sacred Majestie, the reverend Fathers of our Church and the whole cause of our religion . . . And for the better ease herein, and our more readie satisfaction, we have compared your positions and assertions in your long discourses, unto the articles of religion sett forth Anno Domini 1562. and confirmed by Parliament the 13. of her Majesties most blessed and joyfull reigne . . .

On the theology of the Articles, see Oliver O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986). For an account of the Convocation debate on their formulation, see William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation: The Struggle for a Stable Settlement of Religion* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968).

⁵ *Puritan Manifestoes*, ed. W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas (London: S.P.C.K., 1907), pp. 6, 19, 27, 28, 32, and 34. See Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), chapter 9. The term "orthodoxy" is not employed in this essay in its more common historiographical sense as a category referring to the arid scholastic systematization of Lutheran or reformed doctrine in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is rather intended to denote the authoritative teaching of various representative theologians of the Protestant mainstream, the so-called magisterial reformers, over against the radical doctrines of the Anabaptists, antinomians, and Libertines. See Olivier Fatio, "Orthodoxy," trans. Robert Shillenn, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (hereafter cited as *OER*), ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford: The University Press, 1996), pp. 180–183.

⁶ This view has been expressed by W. Speed Hill, "Doctrine and Polity in Hooker's *Lawes*," *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1972): 175 and by H. C. Porter, "Hooker, the Tudor Constitution, and the *Via Media*," in *Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works (SRH)*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cleveland and London: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1972), p. 103. In general, the interpretation of Hooker on the hypothesis of the Anglican *via media* is characteristic of the recent introductions to the *Lawes* in the new *FLE*, vol. 6(1), ed. W. Speed Hill and Egil Grislis. See, for example, Lee W. Gibbs on Book I, iv, *Hooker and his Contemporaries*, pp. 122–124. According to Gibbs, Hooker is a neo-Thomist who "closed the breach opened by the magisterial Reformation and maintained by the disciplinarians between reason and revelation, nature and grace." See also Egil Grislis, *Hooker's Theological Heritage*, *FLE*, 5:630–634, 640: "Hooker was imbued with the spirit of Erasmus." Robert K. Faulkner sees Hooker as the author of a counter-reformation in England; see *Richard Hooker and the Politics of a Christian England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 51.

Roman Catholicism and continental Protestantism.⁷ Hooker has been pointed to frequently as one of the originators and chief proponents of this Anglican way of theological compromise. In general, the interpretation of the doctrine and institutions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church in recent historiography has tended to dismiss the *via media* hypothesis as inappropriate and anachronistic.⁸ This widely accepted revision has yet to secure a foothold in contemporary Hooker scholarship. Indeed, the *via media* hypothesis continues to hold widespread authority as a hermeneutical paradigm in the most recent studies of his theology.⁹ Thus a premise of our present inquiry is that the continued use of this paradigm presents an impediment to the critical interpretation of Hooker's thought.

It is within this context of interpretation that the question needs to be asked once again: where does Hooker's appeal to the authority of natural law in matters of religion place him with respect to the continental reformers? Does such an appeal distance his thinking from the norms of Protestant orthodoxy? Or, alternatively, can the tradition of natural law theory be reconciled with the central teachings of the magisterial Reformation? The initial premise of our approach to these questions involves the abandoning of the anachronistic hypothesis of the Anglican *via media*. An alternative interpretation is here offered and is based on the proposal that Hooker shares considerable theological ground in his account of natural law with four leading representatives of the continental magisterial Reformation: Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon, John Calvin, and Heinrich Bullinger.¹⁰ Central to our pro-

⁷ The classic formulation of this hypothesis is John Henry Newman's. For an historical interpretation see H. D. Weidner's introduction to his recent edition with notes by J. H. Newman, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. xxxiii–xxxvii. For a recent application of this hypothesis to the interpretation of Hooker's theology see Aidan Nichols, *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), pp. 37–52.

⁸ According to Patrick Collinson the weight of scholarly opinion has begun to shift perceptibly away from "the damaging mistake of writing the history of that Church in the anachronistically dichotomous terms of an Anglicanism not yet conceived and an alien Puritanism not yet clearly disowned" (*The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559–1625* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982], p. ix). See also Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. viii, and O. O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, pp. 13–14.

⁹ See William Haugaard's introduction to Hooker's preface to the *Lawes* in the new commentary *FLE*, 6(1), *Elizabeth's Reign: Crucible for an Emerging Anglicanism*, pp. 2–22. A recent and very important exception to this interpretation is proposed by Nigel Atkinson in *Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*. Atkinson directly challenges the traditional consensus of Hooker as a representative of *via media* Anglicanism.

¹⁰ There is, of course, no single theological current that can be called "the magisterial Reformation." In the course of the sixteenth century a variety of distinct confessions emerged. Four main branches of Protestant reform are normally recognized: Lutheran, Genevan, Zurich, and

posed revision to the received reading is the contention that far from initiating a theological compromise between Rome and continental Protestantism, Hooker is really a proponent of the principles of magisterial reform in England. This revised interpretation of Hooker's basic theological orientation is built upon a careful reading of the main apologetic purpose of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*.¹¹ Briefly stated, Hooker frames his discourse as an irenical appeal to the hearts and minds of the "moderate Puritan" critics of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559.¹² Hooker addresses his discourse directly to disciplinarian but nonseparating Puritans who seek reformation of the ecclesiastical law of England (*Lawes*, I.1.3; 1:57.33–58.19). He endeavours to persuade his audience by an appeal to standards of doctrinal orthodoxy, acknowledged by them as authoritative, that a complete reformation has in fact already been achieved. By a concerted appeal to "theological reason"¹³ he hopes to secure *conscientious* acceptance of the settlement by such disciplinarian-Puritan critics as Walter Travers or Thomas Cartwright. In the course of the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s, Travers and Cartwright articulated their support for a scripturally prescribed form of ecclesiastical polity or *disciplina*, and are the representative authorities for the *disciplina* cited by Hooker in the *Lawes*.¹⁴ The comparative stability enjoyed by the Jacobean Church and Cartwright's own eventual conformity to the established church in the late 1590s provide some evidence of success in this irenical purpose. Hooker's overriding apologetic aim as set out in the preface to

Radical Reform. The first three branches are commonly classified as the "magisterial" Reformation over against the fourth. The preface to the *Lawes* makes clear Hooker's concern that the promoters of the *disciplina* have adopted certain features of the radical Protestant agenda. This continental backdrop of confessionalization is of crucial significance to the interpretation of Hooker's thought. For a clear discussion of these distinctions see Konrad Repgen, "Reform," in *OER*, vol. 3, pp. 392–395.

¹¹ This interpretation of Hooker's apologetics has been set forth already in my monograph study *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp. 19–23; see also W. J. Torrance Kirby, "Richard Hooker as an Apologist of the Magisterial Reformation in England," in *RHC*, pp. 219–233. See also Atkinson, *Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, pp. ix–xxii.

¹² This category is adopted from the important study by Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1982); see especially pp. 1–15. On Hooker's irenicism see *Lawes*, pref., 9.3.4 (1:52.12–53.15).

¹³ *Master Hooker's Answer to the Supplication that Master Travers made to the Counsell*, FLE, 5:255.4–15. Luther distinguishes between "theological reason" and mere "human reason" in his *Disputationen* (1535–1545). See Martin Luther, *Werke* (Weimar, 1883–), vol. 39, 1.180 (hereafter cited as *WA*); *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955–1986), vol. 34, p. 144 (hereafter cited as *LW*).

¹⁴ On the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s, see Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Confirmist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

the *Lawes* is, at any rate, inconsistent with an attempt to construct an ecclesiastical *tertium quid* somewhere between Geneva and Rome. To persuade his audience that a complete reformation of the church had been achieved in and through the doctrine and institutions of the Elizabethan Settlement, one of Hooker's chief tasks is to justify the authority of natural law in handling matters of religion. The only possibility of success in this apologetic aim is to offer a demonstration proceeding from the ground of theological assumptions shared by those whom he intends to persuade.¹⁵ Thus it should come as no great surprise when, in his account of natural law, he relies on arguments and authorities employed by Calvin, Luther, and other magisterial reformers.

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ROLE OF NATURAL LAW IN HOOKER'S THEOLOGY

John McNeill argued fifty years ago, perhaps too sanguinely, that there is "no real discontinuity between the teaching of the reformers and that of their predecessors with respect to natural law."¹⁶ It must nevertheless be acknowledged that there is a genuine dialectical difficulty in reconciling the authority of the natural law with the core assumptions of Reformation soteriology and scriptural hermeneutics. As we have already noted, Hooker's advocating natural law to defend the constitution of the Elizabethan Church met with strong opposition from some of his contemporaries. To the anonymous authors of *A Christian Letter* he appeared to overthrow the very foundation of the doctrine of the reformed Church of England by setting a qualification on the perfect sufficiency of scriptural authority.¹⁷ In his debate with Archbishop John Whitgift earlier in the 1570s, Cartwright had argued that the dictum *sola scriptura* constituted a universal rule of human action and that whatever is not done in accord with God's revealed written word is sinful.¹⁸ In the *Lawes*,

¹⁵ See *Lawes*, pref., 1.3 (1:3.1–6): "Thinke not that ye read the words of one, who bentheth him selfe as an adversarie against the truth which ye have alreadie embraced; but the words of one, who desireth even to embrace together with you the self same truth, if it be the truth, and for that cause (for no other God he knoweth) hath undertaken the burthensome labour of this painefull kinde of conference." Cf. Hooker's marginal note on *ACL* in *FLE*, 4:68.12–16.

¹⁶ "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," *Journal of Religion* 26 (1946): 168.

¹⁷ *Lawes*, I.14.5 (1:129.10–14): "It sufficeth therefore that nature and scripture doe serve in such full sort, that they both joynly and not severallye cyther of them be so complete, that unto everlasting felicitie wee neede not the knowledge of any thing more then these two [and] may easily furnish our minds with on all sides." Compare *Lawes*, II.8.3 (1:188.4–7): "the unsufficiencie of the light of nature is by the light of scripture so fully and so perfectly herein supplied, that further light then this hath added there doth not neede unto that ende."

¹⁸ Thomas Cartwright, *A Replye to an Answere made of M. doctor Whitgiffte . . . Agaynst the Admonition* (Hemel Hempstead?: J. Stroud?, 1575), pp. 26–27, cited in *Lawes*, II.1.3 (1:146.1); II.2.1 (1:148.7); II.3.1 (1:150.19); and II.4.1 (1:151.18).

Hooker responds to Cartwright's four scriptural proofs of this position with an invocation of wisdom theology:

Whatsoever either men on earth, or the Angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountain of wisdom, which wisdom hath diversely imparted her treasures unto the world. As her waies are of sundry kinds, so her manner of teaching is not merely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred booke of Scripture; some things by the glorious works of nature: with some things she inspirereth them from above by spirituall influence, in some things she leadeth and trayneth them onely by worldy experience and practise. We may not so in any one speciall kind admire her that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her wayes be according unto their place and degree adored. (*Lawes*, II.1.4; 1:147.23–148.6)¹⁹

The authors of *A Christian Letter* interpret Hooker's theology as openly challenging foundational teaching on the perfect sufficiency of the Scripture (*sola scriptura*). His appeal to diversity of access to divine wisdom is construed as an affirmation that the “light of nature” teaches a knowledge necessary to salvation and that Scripture, therefore, is merely a supplement to the natural knowledge of God.²⁰ The compatibility of natural law theory with such primary doctrines as justification by faith (*sola fides*) and salvation by Christ alone (*solus Christus*) is also called into question.²¹ Hooker's appeal to natural law tradition, the light of reason, the authority of philosophy in general and Aristotle in particular²² is thought to pose such a serious breach with the *Articles of Religion* that, as the Letter puts it, “almost all the principall pointes of our English creed [are] greatlie shaken and contradicted.”²³ In short,

¹⁹ See *The Wisdom of Solomon* 11:4. Compare Calvin, *Inst.*, 1.1.1: “Those blessings which unceasingly distill to us from heaven, are like streams conducting us to the fountain.”

²⁰ See *ACL*, §3. *The Holye Scripture contayneth all thinges necessarie to salvation*. *FLE*, 4:11.1–14.9. See especially 4:11.22.

²¹ *FLE*, 4:14.4–7, and also *ACL*, §6. *Offayth and workes*. *FLE*, 4:19.17–23.9.

²² Hooker refers to Aristotle as “the Arch-Philosopher” and “the mirror of humaine wisdom” (*Lawes*, I.4.1 [1:70.20] and I.10.4 [1:99.28]). For Luther, Aristotle is synonymous with reason and philosophy and is often referred to as the “light of nature” (*WA*, 7.738.31; 7.739.23; 2.395.19; and 2.363.4). See B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 32–42.

²³ *ACL*, §20. *Schoolemen, Philosophie, and Poperie*. *FLE*, 4:65.16–68.19:

yet in all your discourse, for the most parte, Aristotle the patriarch of Philosophers (with divers other human writers) and the ingenuous [*sic!*] schoolemen, almost in all points have some finger; Reason is highlie sett up against holie scripture, and reading against preaching; the church of Rome favorable admitted to bee of the house of God; Calvin with the reformed churches full of faults; and most of all they which indeavored to be most removed from conformitie with the church of Rome; Almost all the principal pointes of our English creed, greatlie shaken and contradicted . . . Shall wee doe wronge to suspect you as a

against Hooker's protestations to the contrary, the authors of *A Christian Letter* regard the appeal to the authority of reason and natural law in theological discourse as simply irreconcilable with "all true Christian doctrine."

Present-day scholarly evaluations of Hooker's thought are more inclined to agree with the assessment of these sixteenth-century critics than with Hooker's own avowed apologetic intent. William Speed Hill, for example, maintains that Hooker's defense of natural law leads away from Protestant orthodoxy in the direction of the Anglican *via media* and that it was precisely "the doctrinal implications of this position—specifically its apparent proximity to Rome—that the authors of *A Christian Letter* feared and opposed."²⁴ With respect to the specific charges made in *A Christian Letter* concerning Hooker's appeal to the authority of natural law, H. C. Porter argues that they were entirely justified. According to Porter, Hooker's critics perceived correctly that "the whole of Hooker's work . . . was a celebration of our natural faculty of reason," and that therefore he had indeed deviated from the path of Protestant orthodoxy.²⁵ By upholding the authority of reason and natural law Hooker had abandoned the magisterial reformers' insistence on the principle *sola scriptum*, and had in fact embraced the Thomist dictum "grace comes not to destroy nature but to fulfill it, to perfect it."²⁶

In his recent introduction to the first book of the *Lawes*, Lee Gibbs adopts much the same view when he observes that Hooker is closer to a Thomistic "conjunctive view" of the relation between grace and nature, scripture and reason than he is to "the more disjunctive perspective of his Calvinist antagonists" (*FLE*, 6[1]: 97). Gibbs points out that Hooker's emphasis on the rationality of law depends on a teleological perspective derived from Aristotle and Aquinas whereas the magisterial reformers adhere to a nominalist, voluntarist emphasis on the essence of law as command rather than reason.²⁷ By this ac-

privie and subtille enemie to the whole state of the Englishe Church, and that you would have men to deeme her Majestie to have done ill in abolishing the Romish religion, and banishing the Popes authoritie; and that you would bee glad to see the backesliding of all reformed churches to bee made conformable to that wicked synagogue of Rome . . . and that you esteeme . . . the bookees of holy scripture to bee at the least of no greater moment then Aristotle and the Schoolemen: Or else doe you meane to bring in a confusion of all thinges, to reconcile heaven and earth, and to make all religions equall: Will you bring us to Atheisme, or to Poperie?

²⁴ Hill, "Doctrine and Polity," *SRH*, p. 175.

²⁵ H. C. Porter, "Hooker, the Tudor Constitution, and the *Via Media*," in *SRH*, p. 103.

²⁶ *Lawes*, I.14.5 (1:129.6). See Porter, *SRH*, pp. 103–107. See also W. David Neelands, "Hooker on Scripture, Reason and 'Tradition,'" *RHC*, pp. 76–82.

²⁷ Gibbs maintains that the controversy turns on "the difference between two natural law traditions. Hooker stands predominantly within the medieval rationalist and realist tradition represented by Aquinas, while the magisterial Protestant Reformers and their disciplinarian

count a rationalist, realist account of law like Hooker's is by definition incompatible with the assumptions of Reformation theology. According to Gibbs, Hooker's more optimistic view of human nature enabled him to close the breach between reason and revelation, nature and grace, which had been opened by the magisterial reformers and maintained by the more radical disciplinarian-Puritans (*FLE*, 6[1]:124). In this fashion, Hooker's theological position is identified as essentially neo-Thomist.²⁸ To regard natural law as a revelation of the divine nature is, in this view, to depart from the established bounds of Protestant orthodoxy into the territory of scholastic divinity or, as the authors of *A Christian Letter* put it, "the darknesse of school learning" (*FLE*, 4:65.1). Hooker's contemporary critics and present-day scholarship are agreed at least on this point: the theology of disciplinarian Puritanism with its rejection of natural law theory is more consistent than the theology of Hooker with the teaching of the magisterial reformers. In what remains of this discussion we shall argue that such a portrayal of the role of natural law in Hooker's theology is questionable; on the contrary, we shall seek to demonstrate that his embrace of the natural law tradition is in fact consistent with a well-established pattern in the practical theology of the magisterial reformers.²⁹

NATURAL LAW IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE MAGISTERIAL REFORMERS

Martin Luther

According to Martin Luther there is a paradox in the Scriptures with respect to the knowledge of God.³⁰ On the one hand, Paul testifies to the Romans that man is able to know God *by nature* (Rom. 1:19, 20). On the other hand, John's

progeny stand squarely in the camp of the medieval voluntarists and nominalists" (Introduction to Book I, *FLE*, 6[1]:103). Otto von Gierke lays out this distinction between the two natural law traditions in *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. W. Maitland (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), pp. 172–173. See also Francis Oakley, "Medieval Theories of Natural Law: William of Ockham and the Significance of the Voluntarist Tradition," *Natural Law Forum* 6 (1961): 65–83.

²⁸ "For Hooker, as for Aquinas, law is grounded on reason (*aliquid rationis*)" (*FLE*, 6[1]:97). Gibbs emphasizes Hooker's dependence on Aquinas throughout his introduction.

²⁹ For a significant critique of this prevailing consensus, see Atkinson, *Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, pp. 1–33.

³⁰ In the following summary of Luther's teaching concerning the knowledge of God and the twofold use of the law I am indebted to the following sources: Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, "Law: Theological Understanding of Law," *OER*, vol. 2, pp. 404–408; William H. Lazareth, "Luther's 'Two Kingdom' Ethic Reconsidered"; and B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther*. See also Atkinson, *Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, pp. 18–22.

Gospel plainly affirms that God can only be known as *revealed in Christ*: “if the Son, whom the Father embraces in His divinity, had not come to reveal God to us, no one would ever know him.”³¹ Luther goes on to ask how these apparently contrary claims can be reconciled and notes with remarkable prescience that someday this question is going to cause trouble! The reconciliation rests on a distinction between two kinds of knowledge of God, one through the law and the other through the gospel. Reason knows God through what Luther calls a *cognitio legalis*, a legal knowing, whereas the saving knowledge of the gospel is by definition inaccessible to reason. This twofold knowledge of God according to the distinction between the law and the gospel in turn provides the basis for the crucial distinction of ethical doctrine, namely the twofold use of the law. For Luther the law and the gospel are two distinct species of word or preaching (*tzweyerley wort oder predigt*). Indeed, the ability to distinguish properly between the two is the essential task of theology (*summa totius Christianae doctrinae*).³² The individual Christian lives simultaneously in the two orders of creation and redemption; the one is natural, temporal, and earthly while the other is spiritual, eternal, and heavenly. There is distinction between the two realms but not disjunctive separation. In the former, man lives externally in relation to the world while in the latter, life is internally directed toward God.

Corresponding to the two kingdoms are two distinct modes of discourse and two corresponding uses of the law. In temporal matters (*coram hominibus*) the rational man is self-sufficient; in this realm the law rules externally and is directed principally by the natural light of reason. This is the *usus politicus* of law which is naturally accessible to all rational creatures. Here in the *forum politicum* the authority of Aristotle is altogether worthy of praise.³³ In spiritual matters that have to do with the soul’s immediate, internal relation to God (*coram Deo*), on the other hand, reason is blind and man is incapable of acceptable ethical action. In matters of salvation the power of reason is simply “death and darkness.”³⁴ In this realm of discourse and action the law functions to show up all human ethical striving as null, and drives the conscience to rely solely on divine grace. This so-called *usus theologicus seu spiritualis* of the law can be discerned only through the revealed light of the gospel. So far as the

³¹ Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* in *LW*, 22.150.

³² See Luther’s introduction to his *Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, *WA*, 40(1).37–51.

³³ “Aristoteles est optimus in morali philosophia; in naturali nihil valet” (*Tischreden*, 1.226.10).

³⁴ *WA*, 39(1).180; *LW*, 34.144. See Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 64–71.

gospel is concerned, that is to say in the *forum theologicum*, all Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light.³⁵

According to Luther, God rules through the gospel as Redeemer and through the law as Creator. A twist enters into this dialectical construct when the political or external use of the law is shown to be necessary for those under the dispensation of the gospel.³⁶ Within this structure of divine governance, the Christian is viewed as both justified and sinful (*simul justus et peccator*) and therefore simultaneously no longer under the law and yet still in need of the law's correction. Thus, according to the *usus theologicus*, natural law demonstrates the futility of any human effort to live justly; at the same time, according to the *usus civilis*, the law demands full obedience. Hence the law imposes no soteriological necessity upon the believer justified by faith but does establish an ethical measure for the good works that proceed from the "indicative" of divine grace.³⁷ It is only with the emergence of the *tertius usus legis* that a divine legal "imperative" is asserted in Philipp Melanchthon's theology of law and in later Lutheran formulations.³⁸ For Luther the Decalogue and the golden rule of the New Testament are both expressions of the natural law commanded in the Scriptures.³⁹ Thus the legal authority of Nature and Scripture coincide. The law inscribed on human hearts by the law of nature, but obscured by sin, is reestablished by revealed command.

³⁵ "Totus Aristoteles ad Theologiam est tenebra ad lucem," from "Ad subscriptas conclusiones respondebit M. Franciscus Guntherus Northusensis, pro Biblia, Praesidente R.P.D. Martino Luthero Augustiniano S. Theologiae Wittembergae Decano, loco et tempore statuendis. M.D.XVII," Conclusion 50, in M. Luther, *Opera Omnia*, vol. I (Wittenberg: Iohannem Lufft, 1558), 56b; quoted in *ACL, FLE*, 4:65.13–14.

³⁶ See William H. Lazareth, "Luther's 'Two Kingdom' Ethic Reconsidered," pp. 173–176.

³⁷ See Luther's explanation of the necessity of regeneration and the subduing of the flesh in *this life, Kirchenpostille* (1537) Epistle for the Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity, *WA*, 45.161–164.

³⁸ On Melanchthon, see p. 15 below. I am grateful to Dr. Niels Gregerson for drawing my attention to the doctrine of the *tertius usus legis* in the Formula of Concord of 1577, the Solid Declaration, Article VI. "The Third Function of the Law" in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 563–568. See especially p. 565:

But in this life Christians are not renewed perfectly and completely. For although their sins are covered up through the perfect obedience of Christ, so that they are not reckoned to believers for damnation, and although the Holy Spirit has begun the mortification of the Old Adam and their renewal in the spirit of their minds, nevertheless the Old Adam still clings to their nature and to all its internal and external powers. . . . Hence, because of the desires of the flesh the truly believing, elect, and reborn children of God require in this life not only the daily teaching and admonition, warning and threatening of the law, but frequently the punishment of the law as well, to egg them on so that they follow the Spirit of God.

See also Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530–1580* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991).

³⁹ See *Commentary on Galatians*, 5:14, *WA*, 45(2).66, 67; *LW*, 27.53; *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, *LW*, 22.150.

Hooker's account of natural law appeals to Luther's distinction of the two-fold use of the law, although his formulation of doctrine is potentially misleading on a terminological level:

The lawe of reason doth somewhat direct men how to honor God as their Creator, but how to glorify God in such sort as is required, to the end he may be an everlasting Saviour, this we are taught by divine law, which law both ascertayneth the truth and supplyeth unto us the want of that other law. So that in morall actions, divine lawe helpeth exceedingly the law of reason to guide mans life, but in supernaturall it alone guideth. (*Lawes*, I.16.5; 1:139.3–10)

It is important to observe here that Hooker's “divine law” is a category that embraces both the gospel and the moral law revealed in Scripture. Owing to the primacy of the gospel–law antinomy in his theology, Luther never applies the terminology of “law” to the teaching of the gospel. The antinomy is affirmed by Hooker, but within the broader categorical distinction between revealed law and natural law. Thus in “supernaturall actions,” the revealed word alone is a guide. In the mystical realm of salvation, reason is incapacitated, and for Hooker “without belief all other things are as nothing” (*Lawes*, I.11.5, 6; 1:118.11–30). Within the order of creation, on the other hand, natural law rules. As a result of man's fallen condition, the law of nature requires some kind of coercive “public regiment” (*Lawes*, I.10.4; 1:100.11). By means of this political use of law in the external realm, it is possible, asserts Hooker, to furnish ourselves with “a life fit for the dignity of man” (*Lawes*, I.10.1; 1:96.10).

On this level, namely the order of creation, the discourse has every appearance of humanism. At the same time, however, the need for such external regiment is taken as evidence of God's remedy for human depravity (*remedium peccati*). The external order of political law and the revelation of a supernatural way of salvation both arise out of disruption of the natural order. In a manner similar to the Christian individual the Church also falls within the distinction of the two orders of creation and redemption. As the mystical body of Christ, the Church is altogether above natural knowing. Yet insofar as the Church falls within the external, political realm it too is subject to the directives of positive human law and thus ultimately to the authority of the Christian prince as the “uncommanded commander” in the external, political realm.⁴⁰ Throughout his discussion of the authority

⁴⁰ See chapter 3 below for a discussion of Hooker's doctrine of the Church in the context of patristic Christological discourse.

of natural law in the government of the visible Church, Hooker depends on the dialectical paradigm established by Luther in the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

Philipp Melanchthon

Philipp Melanchthon observes in his *Loci Communes* that the law of nature is a “divine light” implanted in human intellect and agreeable in content with the law of Moses.⁴¹ Reason would be incapable of marvelling at the glorious works of the Creator if it lacked what Melanchthon calls a preconception or “proleptic” knowledge of God.⁴² Indeed, the divine image shines in man *as* the knowledge of God; this similitude of the divine mind shows itself in a capacity for moral discrimination which is, of course, dependent on a knowledge of the natural law.⁴³ Thus the natural knowledge of God and practical wisdom are bound tightly together. Melanchthon extends Luther’s doctrine of law to include a *tertius usus* whereby the law, natural or revealed, serves as a permanent instruction for holiness to those justified by faith.⁴⁴ Hooker adheres to this third use of the law in his insistence on the necessity of the ethical regeneration of sanctifying righteousness while at the same time he

⁴¹ “De lege naturae,” *Loci Communes Theologici* (Erlangen: Carolus Heyder, 1828), p. 139: “Lumen divinum in mentibus non extinguendum est . . . ergo vera definitio legis naturae: legem naturae esse notitiam legis divinae naturae hominis insitam; ideo enim dicitur homo ad imaginem Dei conditus esse, quia in eo lucebat imago, hoc est, notitia Dei, et similitudo quaedam mentis divinae, id est discrimen honestorum et turpium.” For an interpretation of Melanchthon’s view of natural law and its possible influence on Calvin see Clemens Bauer, “Melanchthons naturrechtslehre,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 42 (1951): 64–100.

⁴² Philipp Melanchthon, *Römerbrief-Kommentar* 1532, ed. Rolf Schäfer, in *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1965), pp. 71–72: “Quamquam enim, ut postea dicit, mens ratiocinatur aliquid de Deo ex consideratione mirabilium eius operum in universa natura rerum, tamen hunc syllogismum ratio non haberet, nisi etiam Deus notitiam kai prolepsin indidisset mentibus nostris.” Cp. *Loci Communes*, p. 138: “Philosophi hoc lumen vocant notitiam principiorum, vocant κοίνας ἐννοιάς και προλήψεις; ac vulgaris divisio nota est, alia esse principia speculabila.”

⁴³ Similarly, for Hooker human rationality and volition are the highest expression of the divine likeness in creation: “man being made according to the likenes of his maker resembleth him also in the maner of working; so that whatsoeuer we worke as men, the same we doe wittingly worke and freely” (*Lawes*, I.7.2; 1:77.20–23).

⁴⁴ *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes of 1555*, trans. and ed. Clyde L. Manschreck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 127:

Although God now dwells in these [believers] and gives them light, and causes them to be conformed to him, nevertheless, all such happens through God’s word, and the law in this life is necessary, that saints may know and have a testimony of the works which please God. Since all men in this mortal life carry in themselves much weakness and sin, daily penance before God ought to increase, and we ought even more to lament our false security and impurity.

continues to uphold the original distinction between the *usus civilis* and the *usus theologicus*.⁴⁵

It has been suggested that Melanchthon stresses the pedagogical function of the law in the ethical realm owing to the humanistic bent of his thought.⁴⁶ It is important to recognize that Melanchthon's humanism, like Hooker's, is erected on the foundation of the distinction between the two orders or kingdoms. In the context of the *tertius usus legis*, the study of Aristotle's *Ethics* becomes an explicitly Christian undertaking; there is a communication of idioms (*comunicatio idiomatum*) as it were between the realms of Gospel and Law. The third use of the law emphasizes the performance of good works as the fruit of faith and thus allows for a restoration or baptism, as it were, of pagan moral science. Hooker's frequent appeals to the authority of pagan practical wisdom, whether it be to Aristotle, Sophocles, Cicero, or to later Christian Neoplatonic sources, can be better understood in the light of Melanchthon's *tertius usus legis*. There is no need whatever for Hooker to abandon the theological ground of the magisterial reformers in order to reconcile the practice of Christian virtue with natural law. Lee Gibbs has observed that Hooker follows Aquinas in defining law as "something pertaining to practical reason" (*FLE*, 6[1]:495). It can be said equally fairly that Melanchthon and Luther follow Aquinas in their account of practical reason according to the doctrine of the *usus civilis*.

Heinrich Bullinger

Heinrich Bullinger, the reformed leader of Zurich, interprets natural law chiefly in terms of the conscience. In his exegesis of Romans 2:15 in the *Decades*,⁴⁷ Bullinger maintains that God has placed the law of nature in the mind in order to instruct it and direct it in its judgement between good and evil. This law also imprints general principles of religion and justice on the soul in such a manner that they can be said to be born with us, and are therefore *naturally* in us. Like Luther and Melanchthon, Bullinger insists on the virtual identity of content and purpose of the natural law and the moral law revealed in Scripture.⁴⁸ The fault of the Gentiles lies not so much in ignorance of God's

⁴⁵ See my discussion of Hooker's soteriology in chapter 3 below.

⁴⁶ Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, *OER*, p. 406.

⁴⁷ These collected sermons were formally authorized by Archbishop Whitgift for the theological study of the clergy of England in 1586, not long after Hooker's appointment to the Mastership of the Temple. See W. P. M. Kennedy, *Elizabethan Episcopal Administration*, vol. 2 (London: Alcuin Club, 1924), pp. 45–46.

⁴⁸ Heinrich Bullinger, *Decades*, ed. T. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1849–1851), 1.2:194, 195:

purposes but rather in a perverse turning away from the knowledge they possess. Thus the will rather than the intellect is at the root of their failure to observe the law.⁴⁹ For Bullinger the disobedience of the Gentiles to the law “engraven in our minds” is expressed typically in the worship of the “graven image.” By virtue of its failure to recognize the true *imago dei* in the rational soul, idolatry is a violation of the natural law as well as the revealed law of Scripture. Hooker regards idolatry in much the same way. As does Bullinger, he sees it as exemplary of “the like kind of generall blindness [which] hath prevailed against the manifest laws of reason.” Prevalence of “the grosser kind of heathenish idolatrie” is evidence of the inherent weakness of human reason and the consequent need for perpetual divine aid (*Lawes*, I.8.11; 1:91.25–93.16).

John Calvin and the duplex cognitio dei

In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin formulates a classic summary of the twofold knowledge of God:

It is one thing to perceive that God our Maker supports us by his power, rules us by his providence, fosters us by his goodiess, and visits us with all kinds of blessings, and another thing to embrace the grace of reconciliation offered to us in Christ. Since, then, the Lord first appears, as well in the creation of the world as in the general doctrine of Scripture, simply as Creator, and afterwards as a Redeemer in Christ, a twofold knowledge of him arises.⁵⁰

The law of nature is an instruction of the conscience, and, as it were, a certain direction placed by God himself in the minds and hearts of men, to teach them what they have to do and what to echeaw. And the conscience, verily, is the knowledge, judgement, and reason of a man . . . and this reason proceedeth from God . . . Wherefore the law of nature [is so called] because God hath imprinted or engraven in our minds some knowledge, and certain general principles of religion, justice, and goodness, which, because they be grafted in us and born together with us, do therefore seem to be naturally in us . . . We understand that the law of nature, not the written law, but that which is graffed in man, hath the same office that the written law hath.

See Edward A. Dowey, “Heinrich Bullinger’s Theology: Thematic, Comprehensive, Schematic,” in *Calvin Studies V*, ed. John Leith and W. Stacy Johnson (Davidson, N.C.: Davidson College, 1990), pp. 41–60 and John T. McNeill, “Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers,” *Journal of Religion* 26 (1946): 178, 179.

⁴⁹ See David C. Steinmetz, “Calvin and the Natural Knowledge of God,” in *Calvin in Context* (Oxford: The University Press, 1995), pp. 26–28.

⁵⁰ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979). Cited thus: *Inst.*, 1.2.1. For most of this century there has been considerable controversy over the right interpretation of Calvin’s natural theology; whether Calvin had a natural theology at all has even been doubted. For a succinct account of this controversy and a summary of the extensive body of critical literature, see William Klempa, “Calvin and Natural Law,” in *Calvin Studies IV*, pp. 1–23.

This distinction of the *duplex cognitio dei* proves to be most significant in the systematic ordering of Calvin's theology and is highly influential in later reformed doctrine as well.⁵¹ In another well known passage in the *Institutes*, he observes that the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in the human mind.⁵² It is interesting to note that, unlike most discussions of this question by the magisterial reformers, Calvin does not appeal here to the Epistle to the Romans. He refers rather to two passages where Cicero argues that knowledge of the divine is engraved on the minds of men.⁵³ Employing language similar to Cicero's, although to a different purpose, Paul argues at the outset of his Epistle to the Romans that God reveals himself to the gentiles through the works of creation (Rom. 1:20) and that his law is inscribed upon their hearts (*scriptum in cordibus suis*).⁵⁴ In his commentary on this passage Calvin interprets the created world as a mirror (*speculum*) of the invisible deity and man himself is the principal image in which the divine majesty shines forth.⁵⁵ Calvin asserts furthermore that human reason is naturally able to discern eter-

⁵¹ See Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952). For an interesting discussion of the history of this motif in reformed theology, see Richard A. Muller, "Duplex cognitio dei in the Theology of Early Reformed Orthodoxy," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 2 (1979): 51–61.

⁵² *Inst.*, I.3.1:

That there exists in the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renewes and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man, being aware that there is a God, and that he is their maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service. . . . But, as a heathen [Cicero] tells us, there is no nation so barbarous, no race so brutish, as not to be imbued with the conviction that there is a God.

Compare *Lawes*, V.1.3 (2:20.4–9) for the concept of the *semen religionis*.

⁵³ *Inst.*, I.3.1. The two passages cited from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* are as follows: "Inteligi necesse est deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus.—Quae nobis natura informationem deorum ipsorum dedit, eadem *insculpsit in mentibus* ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus" (I.17). The second reference is from Bk. II.4: "Itaque inter omnes omnium gentium summa constat; omnibus enim innatum est, et in animo quasi *insculptum esse deos*" (italics mine). Calvin also cites the "Christian Cicero" Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum*, liber III.10, *Opera* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1570).

⁵⁴ Compare Hooker, *Lawes*, I.8.3 (1:84.7–16) and III.9.3 (1:238.25–239.4).

⁵⁵ See Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 67 ff. See especially the comment on Rom. 1:20:

God is in himself invisible; but as his majesty shines forth in his works and in his creatures everywhere, men ought in these to acknowledge him, for they clearly set forth their Maker: and for this reason the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews says, that this world is a mirror, or representation of invisible things. He [Paul] does not mention all the particulars which may be thought to belong to God; but he states, that we can arrive at the knowledge of his eternal power and divinity; for he who is the framer of all things, must necessarily be without beginning and from himself.

nal power and divinity through a contemplation of the splendor of the natural order with the rational creature as its principal glory.⁵⁶ The proper image of the divine glory is displayed in the rational human soul. Calvin quotes Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

While the mute creation downward bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes,
Beholds his own hereditary skies.⁵⁷

In yet another passage in the second book of the *Institutes*, Calvin weighs the power of human reason with respect to actual knowledge of the kingdom of God. He concludes that pagan spiritual discernment is limited and "men otherwise most ingenious are blinder than moles" (*Inst.*, 2.2.19). Although they can have no knowledge of God's paternal favor, and hence of salvation, nevertheless they are able to attain to a certain limited knowledge of God. To know God as Father requires the revelation of the divine law whereas the divine existence, eternity, and power are accessible to the unaided power of human reason. There is a natural knowledge of God as Maker of all things but *not* as Redeemer.⁵⁸ Thus the Christian is simultaneously subject to the conditions of blindness and sight.

There are also two ethical concepts of nature at work here. On the one side, human nature is endowed with a sense of natural justice and equity which is not completely obliterated by sin, although it is severely impaired (*Inst.*, 2.2.13). As a consequence of the *usus civilis legis* fallen man is able to discern the natural law and is thereby able to construct an ethical-political order even though this external observance of the law can accomplish nothing whatever in the economy of salvation.⁵⁹ On the other side, from the viewpoint of the *usus theologicus*, man as fallen is utterly blind to the knowledge of God's kingdom and his fatherly grace. The mysteries of redemption can be apprehended solely by the illumination of divine grace (*Inst.*, 2.2.20). Calvin's account of the twofold knowledge of God adheres closely to Luther's distinction between the orders of creation and redemption.

In his exposition of the moral law Calvin maintains that the revealed law of the Decalogue is naturally inscribed on every heart (*Inst.*, 2.8.1) such that

⁵⁶ On Calvin's appeal to nature and natural law see John I. Hesselink, Jr., *Calvin's Concept of Law*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series, vol. 30 (Allison Park, Pa., 1992), pp. 56–67 and Susan E. Schreiner, *Theatre of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin*, Studies in Historical Theology 3 (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1991), pp. 73–95.

⁵⁷ *Inst.*, 1.15.2. The translation is John Dryden's.

⁵⁸ *Inst.*, 2.2.18. See also *Inst.*, 2.2.22: "If the Gentiles have the righteousness of the law naturally engraven on their minds, we certainly cannot say that they are altogether blind as to the rule of life."

⁵⁹ Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God*, p. 63.

the law of Scripture and the natural law are united in content (*Inst.*, 4.20.14, 15). Calvin goes even further than Melanchthon in upholding the third use of the law. For Calvin it is the principal use and is most closely connected with law's proper end (*Inst.*, 2.7.12). The Pauline abrogation of the law by no means abolishes law simply; rather the law loses its power of constraining the conscience.⁶⁰ In the regeneration of the will the law becomes a teacher and commander. This restoration or "baptism" of law in the third use has significant consequences for the role of natural law. Thus growth in ethical virtue—or sanctification as it is called—is achieved in large part through the study of the moral law revealed by both nature and Scripture.⁶¹

HOOKER AND THE AUTHORITY OF MAGISTERIAL DOCTRINE

In *A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride*,⁶² Hooker defines law in general as:

an exact rule whereby humane actions are measured.⁶³ The rule to measure and judge them by is the law of god . . . Under the name of law we must comprehend not only that which god hath written in tables and leaves but that which nature hath *engraven in the hartes of men*. Els how should those heathen which never had bookes but heaven and earth to look upon be convicted of perversnes? *But the Gentils which had not the law in books had saith the apostle the effect of the law written in their hartes.* (Rom. 2; *FLE*, 5:312)

The passage quoted from Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the crucial scriptural text cited by Hooker in support of the authority of natural law.⁶⁴ This is

⁶⁰ *Inst.*, 2.7.14: "Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, that until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall remain unfulfilled."

⁶¹ See Harro Höpfl, *The Christian Polity of John Calvin* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1982), pp. 179–184; and John Leith, "Creation and Redemption; Law and Gospel in the Theology of John Calvin," in *Marburg Revisited: A Reexamination of Luther and Reformed Traditions*, ed. Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1966), pp. 150, 151.

⁶² The *Sermon on Pride* is one of seven tractates by Hooker first published posthumously in 1612. It has recently been reedited and published in *FLE*, 5:309–361. For a textual introduction, see *FLE*, 5:299–308.

⁶³ Compare with the definition of law in general at *Lawes*, I.2.1 (1:58.26–29): "That which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working, the same we tearme a *Lawe*." See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia Iae, q. 90, art. 1, reply 1 in *The Treatise on Law*, ed. R. J. Henle (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p. 119: "lex sit regula quaedam et mensura, dicitur dupliciter esse in aliquo. Uno modo sicut in mensurante et regulante; et quia hoc est proprium rationis idea per hunc modum lex est in ratione sola. Alio modo sicut in regulato et mensurato; et sic lex est in omnibus quae inclinantur in aliquid ex aliqua lege." The same formulation of law as "measure" is adopted by Heinrich Bullinger, *Decades*, 1.2:209.

⁶⁴ Rom. 2:14, 15: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things

hardly surprising because Romans 2:15, as we have seen, is the *locus classicus* for virtually all discussion of natural law throughout the history of Christian thought.⁶⁵ It is important here to note the derivation of the natural law. In this definition Hooker represents the idea of law as fundamentally threefold. First there is the law of God as simply given. Elsewhere Hooker identifies this undifferentiated principle of law as the rule “which God hath eternallie purposed himself in all his works to observe” (*Lawes*, I.3.1; 1:163.7). This “eternal law,” as he calls it, is the “highest welspring and fountaine” out of which all other kinds of law proceed.⁶⁶

Strictly interpreted, the eternal law itself is “laid up in the bosom of God” altogether above human understanding and our safest eloquence concerning it is silence.⁶⁷ With marked *apophatic* emphasis Hooker avers that “we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable” (*Lawes*, I.2.2; 1:59.17). At the same time, however, there is a *kataphatic* need to draw attention to the fact that the eternal law “reads itself” to the world. Thus there is the paradox of keeping this invisible, unknowable law “always before our eyes” (*Lawes*, I.16.2; 1:136.4–15). The eternal law, though unknowable *in itself*, is the highest source of all other kinds of law and is made known *to us* under two primary aspects: on the one hand, it is revealed by God’s word written in the Scriptures and, on the other, it is manifest in creation and known by the law inscribed on human hearts *by nature*. These two primary modes or *summa genera* whereby the one eternal law is made accessible to human understanding are termed respectively by Hooker the divine law and the law of nature.⁶⁸ Although we are “neither able nor worthy to open and look into” the book of

contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the means while accusing or else excusing one another.” Hooker refers to this passage frequently. See *Lawes*, I.8.3 (1:84.7–16), I.16.5 (1:138.27–139.8), II.8.6 (1:190.11–16), III.2.1 (1:207.14–21), III.7.2 (1:217.30–218.3) where he refers to the “edicts of nature,” III.9.3 (1:238.31–239.4) and V.1.3 (2:20.4–9) for the concept of the *semen religionis*.

⁶⁵ On this see J. Bohatec, *Calvin und das Recht* (Feudinger: Buchdruckerei u. Verlagsanstalt, 1934), p. 5.

⁶⁶ That is, the “fountaine of wisdom,” *Lawes*, II.1.4 (1:147.24) and “the author fountain and cause of our justice” in *Pride*, FLE, 5:341.3–9.

⁶⁷ *Lawes*, I.3.1 (1:63.15) and I.2.5 (1:62.10). Hooker adopts the approach of Neoplatonic apophatic theology in his insistence on the unknowability of the divine simplicity:

Dangerous it were for the feeble braine of man to wade farre into the doings of the most High, whome although to knowe be life, and joy to make mention of his name: yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatnes above our capacitie and reach. (*Lawes*, I.2.2; 1:59.12–19)

⁶⁸ See *Lawes*, I.1.3 (1:58.11–19). See *Lawes*, I.8.3 (1:84.9) for the identification of natural law with the Law or light of reason. Compare *Lawes*, III.11.8 (1:253.15–20).

the eternal law, the books of scripture and nature reveal its contents in a manner adapted to our finite capacity.⁶⁹

Hooker is certainly not alone among Reformation theologians in holding that the knowledge of God, and thus also of the eternal law, is attainable by means of *both* Scripture and reason. It is furthermore a commonplace of the exegesis of the reformers that the twofold obligation to honor God and deal justly with one's neighbor is taught by both natural and divine law. The interplay between the natural and the revealed knowledge of God gives shape to the magisterial reformers' complex, dialectical approach to the authority of natural law; and the theory of natural law in turn constitutes a critical link between theology and ethics in their thought as well.

Hooker's account of the twofold manifestation of the eternal law through the *summa genera* of natural law and divine law, the *duplex gubernatio dei*,⁷⁰ gives practical expression as it were to Calvin's epistemological motif of the *duplex cognitio dei*. Just as for Calvin the Lord reveals himself both through the creation of the world and by the revelation of the redeeming Grace of Christ, so also Hooker's eternal law manifests itself in the realm of creation as natural law and in the realm of redemption as divine law. While the eternal law in itself "cannot be compassed with that wit and those senses which are our owne," it is nevertheless manifest in the "glorious works of nature" (*Lawes*, I.11.5; 1:116.21).

In Hooker's claim that the pagan philosophers were able to attain to a knowledge of the nature of God and of his Law, there is a distinct echo of Calvin's natural theology:

the wise and learned among the verie Heathens themselves, have all acknowledged some first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth. Neither have they otherwise spoken of that cause, then as an Agent, which knowing *what* and *why* it worketh, observeth in working a most exact *order* or *lawe*. . . . all confesse in the working of that first cause, that *counsell* is used, *reason* followed, a *way* observed, that is to say, constant *order* and *law* is kept, wherof it selfe must needs be author unto it selfe. (*Lawes*, I.2.3; 1:59.33–60.14)

Quite remarkably, Hooker seems to suggest in this passage that a *Logos* theology can be discerned in the pagan understanding of Law as the divine first principle and perhaps also, by implication, an adumbration of the Christian

⁶⁹ See *Lawes*, I.2.5 (1:62.10); I.2.2 (1:59.12–20); and V.56.5 (2:237.18–25). "Now amongst the Heathens which had noe booke whereby to know God besides the volumes of heaven and earth" (*Grace and Free Will*, §12, *FLE*, 4:111.21–23).

⁷⁰ Hooker employs this expression in his treatment of the divine operations *ad extra* in *Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination*, Trinity College Dublin, MS 364, folio 80, printed in *FLE*, 4:83–97; see especially pp. 86, 87.

doctrine of the Trinity. Homer, Plato, the Stoics, and no less an authority than Thrice-great Hermes are all enlisted in support of the proposition implicit in these expressions of *Logos* theology, namely that God is Law.⁷¹

For Hooker—as for Luther, Melanchthon, Bullinger, and Calvin—the foundation of a theological reflection on government is the twofold knowledge of God. In *Notes toward a fragment on Predestination*, Hooker distinguishes between two species of the divine governance:

The government of God is: general over all; special over rational creatures. There are two forms of government: that which would have been, had free creation not lost its way; that which is now when it has lost its way.⁷²

Throughout his discourse on the *duplex gubernatio dei*, Hooker adheres strictly to the magisterial reformers' dialectical exposition of the two realms of creation and redemption and their respective uses of the law. In Hooker's view, strife within the Elizabethan Church over constitutional forms ultimately stems from disagreement over the interpretation of the proper relation between the two *summa genera* of law, especially with respect to the precise delineation of their proper spheres of authority. Epistemologically the struggle turns on the precise manner of interpreting the proper functions of natural and revealed theology. Hooker sees the debate over the ecclesiastical constitution in terms logically linked to the *duplex cognitio dei*, and thus to one of the crucial distinctions of reformed theology. In this approach to the question of law he follows a pattern of discourse already well established by other magisterial reformers. In *A Learned Sermon on the Nature of Pride*, he acknowledges the difficulty of making the distinction between the “waie of nature” and the “waie of grace” (*Pride*, 5:313.7). For Hooker, this is the great question of sixteenth-century theological discourse: “the want of exact distinguishing between these two waies [viz., of Nature and Grace] and observing what they have common

⁷¹ *Lawes*, I.2.3 (1:60.4–11):

Thus much is signified by that which Homer mentioneth, Διός δ' ἐτέλείτο βουλή (*Jupiter's Counsell was accomplished*). Thus much acknowledged by Mercurius Trismegistus. τὸν πάντα κόσμου ἐποίησον δὲ δημιουργὸς οὐ χεροῖς ἀλλὰ λόγῳ (*The creator made the whole world not with hands, but by Reason*). Thus much confess by Anaxagoras and Plato, terming the maker of the world an Intellectual worker. Finallie the Stoikes, although imagining the first cause of all things to be fire, held nevertheless that the same fire having arte, did δῦῳ βαδίζειν ἐπὶ γενέσει κόσμου (*Proceed by a certaine and a set Waie in the making of the world*). [All translations are Hooker's own]

In the *FLE*, Commentary on Book I, it is observed that Hooker derives his references to Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Stoicks from the fifth-century Stobaeus's *Eclogues*. See P. G. Stanwood, “Stobaeus and Classical Borrowing in the Renaissance,” *Neophilologus* 59 (1975): 141–146.

⁷² John Booty's translation of Hooker's original Latin notes in *FLE*, 4:86.28–87.12:

Gubernatio Dei: Generale super omnia; Speciale super creaturas rationales. Gubernationis duplex modus: Qui fuisse si creatura libera non exorbitasset; Qui nunc est cum exorbitarit.

what peculiar hath bene the cause of the greatest part of that confusion whereof christianity at this daie laboureth" (*Pride*, 5:313.19–23).⁷³

The question whether Hooker's theology exemplifies a conjunctive rather than a disjunctive view of the relation between Grace and Nature is a great deal more complicated than twentieth-century criticism has frequently allowed. As with the thought of the Reformation theologians we have considered, Hooker's position is dialectically complex. In his theology, as in theirs, there is simultaneously disjunction and conjunction in the relation between the two kingdoms, the two kinds of discourse, and the two ways of righteousness. The knowledge of God as Creator must be kept distinct from the knowledge of God as Redeemer; yet these two forms, although distinct, are by no means separable, and thus they cannot be denoted as simply "disjunctive." By analogy, the natural law and the revealed law of Scripture are distinct modes or aspects of the eternal law, yet they are nonetheless inseparable in origin. Both are expressions of the one eternal law. The orders of Nature and Grace are very clearly distinguished by the magisterial reformers, Hooker included.

Yet these distinct orders or realms of law are understood to be united in the simplicity of their common divine source as well as in our knowledge of them. For all of the magisterial reformers whose theology we have considered, knowledge of God is granted through a contemplation of both the splendor of creation and the written word of the Scriptures. For Hooker just as for Luther, Calvin, and the others, there is necessarily a conjunction of the orders of Grace and Nature, both in their divine author and in the souls of rational creatures. To uphold the doctrine of *sola scriptura* is not to denigrate the authority of the light of reason. Hooker can be taken as speaking for the principles of these reformers collectively when he states:

Injurious we are unto God, the Author and giver of humane capacity, judgement and wit, when because of some things wherein he precisely forbiddeth men to use their own inventions, we take occasion to disau-thorize and disgrace the works which he doth produce by the hand, either of nature or of grace in them. We offer contumely, even unto him, when we scornfully reject what we list without any other exception then this, the brain of man hath devised it.⁷⁴

In the marginal notes penned on his own copy of *A Christian Letter*⁷⁵ and

⁷³ For further discussion by Hooker of the relation of Nature and Grace, see the Dublin Fragment on *Grace and Free Will*, *FLE*, 4:101–113.

⁷⁴ *Lawes*, VII.11.10 (1:210.27–211.6). Compare Calvin, *Inst.*, 2.2.15 where he argues that to despise the admirable light of truth displayed in the profane authors is to insult their divine Creator and Giver.

⁷⁵ See John Booty's introduction to "Hooker's Marginal Notes," *FLE*, 4:xxviii–xxxiii. The autograph notes on *ACL* are transcribed from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 215b.

in the incomplete theological tractates that comprise the beginning of a formal response,⁷⁶ we see clearly that the most pressing theological question Hooker faced was the need to justify continuity with the natural law tradition within the limits of Protestant orthodoxy. In one of his comments scrawled on his copy of *A Christian Letter*, Hooker invokes “Calvins judgment of philosophie” in a letter to Martin Bucer:

As truth is most precious, so all men confess it to be so. And yet, since God alone is the source of all good, you must not doubt, that whatever truth you anywhere meet with, proceeds from Him, unless you would be doubly ungrateful to Him; it is in this way you have received the word descended from heaven. For it is sinful to treat God’s gifts with contempt; and to ascribe to man what is peculiarly God’s is a still greater impiety. Philosophy is, consequently, the noble gift of God, and those learned men who have striven hard after it in all ages have been incited thereto by God himself, that they might enlighten the world in the knowledge of the truth.⁷⁷

Hooker’s appeal to Calvin is intended as a vindication of continuity with the tradition of natural law theory by an authority acceptable to his disciplinarian-Puritan critics. In this he seeks to identify his own theology with the magisterial reformers’ repudiation of the biblical literalism and exclusivism of the Radical Reformation. Consistently with his wider apologetic aim, Hooker demonstrates to the disciplinarian opponents of the Elizabethan Settlement that vilification of the practical reason on which the ecclesiastical constitution rests is in fact at odds with Protestant orthodoxy as interpreted by these magisterial reformers. Here I have argued that, together with Luther, Melanchthon, Bullinger, and Calvin, Hooker maintains an orthodox, dialectical balance between the claims of natural law and the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, each within its proper sphere. Indeed, the law of nature is to be upheld as an indispensable instrument in theological discourse for reasons which Hooker demonstrates on the basis of a sound interpretation of the Scriptures.

⁷⁶ Hooker spent the short remainder of his life writing a response to the criticisms contained in *ACL*. He did not live to see his answer published. The Dublin Fragments on *Grace and Free Will*, *Grace and the Sacraments*, and *The Tenth Article touching on predestination* (*FLE*, 4:81–167) constitute a portion of his intended though unfinished reply to *ACL*. See especially *FLE*, 4:103.9–24, 104.2–9, 105.18–106.4. The copy texts for the Dublin Fragments, Trinity College, Dublin, MSS 121 and 364, folio 80, were first published in *The Works of . . . Mr. Richard Hooker*, ed. John Keble, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1836), and reprinted in 7th ed. revised, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888) vol. 2, pp. 537–597.

⁷⁷ Calvin, *Letters*, ed. Jules Bonnet and trans. David Constable, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1855–1857), 2:198, 199; *Epistolae et responsorum* (Lausanne: Excudebat Franciscus le Preux, 1576), pp. 179, 180; CR, 48:530. The attribution to Calvin is not entirely certain. This passage from the letter is quoted by John Booty in his commentary on *ACL*, *FLE*, 4:65.11–12. Compare *Lawes*, VII.11.10 (1:210.27–211.6).

II

The Context of Philosophical Discourse: The Neoplatonic Logic of “Procession and Return” in Richard Hooker’s Generic Division of Law

In the first book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Poltie*, Richard Hooker constructs a complex generic division of the various forms of law. His approach to the definition of law is remarkable for its simultaneous appropriation of a systematic Neoplatonic structure of argument and an appeal to orthodox Protestant assumptions with respect to the relation of the orders of Nature and Grace.¹ At the outset of Book I, Hooker offers a brief sketch of his argument in which he provides a useful starting point for understanding the Neoplatonic structure of his system of laws. He begins with an allusion to the polemical occasion of the treatise in the ecclesiological controversies that arose in England as a consequence of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559:

Because the point about which wee strive is the quality of our lawes, our first entrance hereinto cannot better be made, then with consideration of the nature of lawe in generall, and of that lawe which giveth life unto all the rest, which are commendable just and good, namely the lawe whereby the Eternall himselfe doth worke. Proceeding from hence

¹ W. David Neelands argues that while Hooker recognizes Calvin’s threefold use of the law, the former’s organization of the system of laws owes little to Calvin, and thus Hooker’s “treatment of law was a clear departure from these Reformation themes, although it did not oppose them” (see Neeland’s essay “Scripture, Reason and ‘Tradition,’” *RHC*, p. 77). For an important discussion of related questions see W. J. Hankey, “Augustinian Immediacy and Dionysian Mediation in John Colet, Edmund Spenser, Richard Hooker and the Cardinal de Bérulle,” *Augustinus in der Neuzeit: Colloque de la Herzog August Bibliothek de Wolfenbüttel 14–17 Octobre 1996*, ed. Dominique de Courcelles (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 148–154. I am much indebted to Dr. Hankey for his contribution to my thinking on this question.

to the lawe first of nature, then of scripture, we shall have the easier ac-
cesse unto those things which come after to be debated, concerning the
particular cause and question which wee have in hand.²

By this account, the idea of law is fundamentally threefold. First there is the law “which God hath eternallie purposed himself in all his works to ob-serve.”³ This eternal law is the “highest welspring and fountaine” of all other kinds of law. Although there is a great variety of derivative forms of law, they are contained, as it were, within two principal kinds: the law of nature and the revealed law of Scripture. Hooker often refers to the latter as the divine law, which is not to be confused with eternal law. These three *summa genera*—eternal law, natural law, and divine law—together constitute a comprehensive division of the “kinds” of law. On account of the subordination of the two derivative *summa genera* to the one eternal law, there is a sense in which Law, viewed from the standpoint of its divine originative principle, is simply one. This apparent ambiguity of the simultaneous unity and multiplicity of law lies at the very heart of Hooker’s Neoplatonic vision of the *procession* of the dialec-tical division of the manifold forms of law out of the one eternal law.⁴

THE NEOPLATONIC STRUCTURE OF HOOKER’S DISCOURSE

The starting point ($\alpha\omega\xi\eta$) of Hooker’s logic of generic division is classically Neoplatonic. The exposition begins properly with God himself, that is God understood as “the One.” Hooker states most emphatically that “God is one, or rather *verie Onenesse*, and meere unitie, having nothing but it selfe in it selfe, and not consisting (as all things do besides God) of many things.”⁵ In the Neoplatonic cosmology, both pagan and Christian, the One is the highest principle, the supreme source of all that is, of all essences and existences, of

² *Lawes*, I.1.3 (1:58.11–19).

³ *Lawes*, I.3.1 (1:63.7).

⁴ On the concept of the *procession* of the forms of law see, for example, *Lawes*, I.3.4 (1:68.6–8): “. . . the naturall generation and *processe* of all things receyveth order of *proceeding* from the settled stabilitie of divine understanding.”

⁵ *Lawes*, I.2.2 (1:59.20–22). This emphasis on God’s simplicity of being is central to Neopla-tonic thought. The “One” of Plotinus transcends thought and all determinacy, and is the $\alpha\omega\xi\eta$ from which and to which all multiplicity proceeds. See Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Burgett, New York: Larson Publications, 1992), III.8, pp. 273–287; V.4, pp. 460–464; VI.9, pp. 698–709. On the importance of the doctrine of the One in the thought of Plotinus, see Elmer O’Brien, ed., *The Essential Plotinus: Representative Treatises from the Enneads*, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), pp. 17–21. For a Christian appropriation of this doctrine see also Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, in *The Complete Works* (Classics of Western Spiritu-ality), trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1987), chapter 13 concerning “Perfect” and “One,” 977B 1–981B 8, pp. 127–130.

intellect and of intelligibility, and also of all order in the world. Given the political orientation of his theology, Hooker's emphasis naturally falls on the interpretation of the One as the source of cosmic order. Thus he proceeds to identify the Eternal Law with God himself whose very being is a law to his own divine operation.⁶ His aim in the discourse of Book I is to show "in what manner as every good and perfect gift, so this very gift of good and perfect lawes is derived from the father of lightes."⁷ Just as Neoplatonic cosmology accounts for the genesis of the world by means of a downward procession or emanation from the One, so also Hooker derives a diverse hierarchy of laws from the one Eternal Law. He adheres closely to the logic of procession whereby the originative principle of Law remains simple in itself while, proceeding out of itself, it generates manifold derivative forms, and thus is the source of both unity and continuity in the entire system of laws.⁸

The unity of the system of laws is expressed through a twofold motion. First there is a downward procession of generation in which the multiple forms of law come to be out of the One. This is balanced by an upward "return" whereby all derivative forms are gathered up into the original divine unity. Hooker's two derivative *summa genera*, namely the natural law and the revealed law of Scripture, represent these two principal directions of the cosmic procession. In the circular process of emanation and return, Hooker places his argument in a theological tradition that harks back to the early centuries of the Christian era. Even before this pattern of *processio et redditus* was taken up by Christian theologians, Plotinus argued that the One is the terminus of all striving in the world because it is the originative first principle.⁹ Sim-

⁶ *Lawes*, I.2.2 (1:59.5): "The *being* of God is a kinde of *lawe* to his *working*: for that perfection which God is, gegetteth perfection to that he doth." The trinitarian structure of Hooker's thought is already discernible in this preliminary observation concerning the Eternal Law.

⁷ *Lawes*, I.16.1 (1:135.11–13).

⁸ For further examples of Hooker's employment of the Neoplatonic language and logic of "procession," see *Lawes*, I.3.2 (1:65.4), I.3.4 (1:67.29) and (1:68.6–8), I.5.2 (1:73.5–8). At the latter he states: "Againe sith there can bee no goodness desired which proceedeth not from God himselfe, as from the supreme cause of all things; and every effect doth after a sort conteine, at least wise resemble the cause from which it proceedeth: all things in the worlde are saide in some sort to seeke the highest, and to covet more or lesse the participation of God himselfe." The Neoplatonic logic of "procession" is aptly summarized by Proclus as follows: "every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and returns to it" (*The Elements of Theology*, ed. E. R. Dodds [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], p. 38).

⁹ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. McKenna, III.8.7: "It is certain, also, that as the Firsts exist in vision all other things must be straining towards the same condition; the starting point (*ἀρχή*) is, universally, the goal (*τέλος*)."¹⁰ Cp. *Ennead*, V.4.1 on the One as origin and VI.9.3 on the One as end. For an instance of the Christian appropriation of this *exodus-reditus* theology see Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), XIII.iv.5. See also Pseudo-Dionysius, CH 1 120B 1–120A 2, *The Complete Works*, p. 145: "Inspired by the father, each procession of the Light spreads itself generously toward us, and in its power to unify, it stirs us

ilarly, for Hooker the creation of the world is an “outward procession” or *exitus* from the divine unity. The natural law is God’s means of preserving the order of the world once created; it is effectively the eternal law as kept by all creatures. The complete action of return, on the other hand, is accomplished through the redemptive operation of divine self-revelation in the written word of the Scriptures. This divine law is God’s chosen means of restoring a fallen creation to unity with himself. Metaphysically considered, the purpose of the discourse has in fact two objects in view: first to demonstrate the derivation of the many from the One and second to show also the reintegration of the many back into the One.

The procession and return of the manifold forms of law comprised by these *summa genera* is accomplished hierarchically according to the *lex divinitatis*, the so-called law of divinity:¹⁰

For order is a graduall disposition. The whole world consisting of partes so manie so different is by this only thing upheld, he which framed them hath sett them in order. Yea the very deitie it self both keepeth and requireth for ever this to be kept as a law, that wheresoever there is a coagmentation of many, the lowest be knitt to the highest by that which being interjacent may cause each to cleave unto other and so all to continue one.¹¹

by liftin us up. It returns us back to the oneness and deifying simplicity of the Father who gathers us in. For, as the sacred Word says, “from him and to him are all things” (Rom. 11:36). Compare *Lawes*, I.2.6 (1:62.14–20). See Paul Rorem’s note 4 on p. 145 of Pseudo-Dionysius, *Complete Works*.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the scholastic appeal to the Dionysian *lex divinitatis* cf. W. J. Hankey, “Dionysius dixit? Lex divinitatis est ultima per media reducere: Aquinas, Hierocracy and ‘augustinisme politique’,” in *Tomaso d’Aquino: proposte nuove di lettura. Festschrift Antonio Tognolo*, ed. Ilario Tolomio, *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale*, 18 (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1992), pp. 119–150. The *lex divinitatis* is the law of the “great chain of being.” Hooker mentions the metaphor of the “chain” at *Lawes*, I.11.1 (1:111.14) in the context of an Aristotelian teleological defense of the unity of all motion and desire in a “final cause.”

Although he does not actually use the term *lex divinitatis*, Arthur O. Lovejoy defines the law of the chain in his classic study *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea, The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University, 1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 59:

the conception of the universe as . . . composed of an immense, or—by the strict but seldom rigorously applied logic of the principle of continuity—of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-existence, through “every possible” grade up to the *ens perfectissimum*—or, in a somewhat more orthodox version, to the highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite—everyone of them differing from that immediately above and that immediately below it by the “least possible” degree of difference.

¹¹ *Lawes*, VIII.2.1 (3:331.19–332.1). In Hooker’s autograph manuscript draft of this passage, he cites the Christian Neoplatonist Pseudo-Dionysius as his source for this observation. See *FLE*, 3:494.10–12: “Lex itaque divinitatis est infima per media ad supra reduci, inquit B. Dionysius.” [And so it is a divine law, says St. Dionysius, for the lowest things to be led back to

By this Neoplatonic law of procession, the derivative forms of law in all their complexity remain within the primal form of the Eternal Law, and it continues to be in them without the loss of its own original simplicity. It is the simultaneous procession of the many from the One and the remaining of the many within the One which constitutes the continuity of the cosmic order.¹² The “order of procession” which culminates in the creation of man, who is the very image of God (*Lawes*, I.7.2; 1:77.20), is also broken by him. Owing to man’s willful rejection of the order of creation, the natural law by itself is no longer sufficient to secure the unity of the cosmos under God (*Lawes*, I.11.5, 6; 1:118.11–18). While fallen humanity continues to possess a *natural* desire to be happy,¹³ and thus desires to be reunited with the eternal source of order, on account of original sin man is “. . . in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast.”¹⁴

Thus observance of the natural law is no longer effectual in preserving the original, divinely constituted order. Nonetheless “it is an axiome of nature that naturall desire cannot utterly be frustrate,” says Hooker, citing Aristotle.¹⁵ While nature requires a “more divine perfection,” the means whereby this perfection is attained must be *supernatural*.¹⁶ A complete restoration of the order is provided directly by God himself in the divine act of redemption “in himselfe prepared before all worldes.” The redemption is a *reditus* or “re-

the highest by those that are intermediate.] The translation of “*divinitatis*” in the *FLE* commentary, given here in square brackets, is potentially misleading. *Divinitas* is to be taken substantively and not as an adjective. *Lex divinitatis* is more properly “the law of the divine power” and refers to the operation of the Eternal Law in and through the process of *exitus et reditus*, that is, through the law of the chain. Compare *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in *The Complete Works*, ed. Luibheid, pp. 156–159, 166–169 and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, pp. 233–243. This formulation of the *lex divinitatis* is Boniface VIII’s in the bull *Unam Sanctam* (1302), incorporated into *Extravagantes Communes*, 1.8.1 “De Maioritate et Obedientia”: “Nam secundum beatum Dionysium, Lex divinitatis est, Infima per media in suprema reduci.” See the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. P. Lancelotus (Paris, 1587), p. 853; Friedberg, 2:1245; *FLE*, 6(2), p. 1081. See also David Luscombe, “The ‘Lex Divinitatis’ in the Bull ‘Unam Sanctam’ of Pope Boniface VIII,” in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 205–221.

¹² Compare Pseudo-Dionysius in the *Celestial Hierarchy*, 1 120A 1: “Even though in various ways every divine enlightenment proceeds, out of goodness, toward those provided for, it not only remains simple in itself but also unifies those it enlightens.”

¹³ *Lawes*, I.11.4 (1:114.8–10).

¹⁴ *Lawes*, I.10.1 (1:96.26–29).

¹⁵ *Lawes*, I.11.4 (1:114.15). Hooker cites the Proemium of Aquinas’s commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics. See Thomas Aquinas, *Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio in duodecim libros* (Turin: Marietti, 1950), p. 6. That nature does nothing in vain is a central doctrine of Aristotle’s Physics. See also commentary, *FLE*, 6(I), p. 513.

¹⁶ See *Lawes*, I.11.4–6 (1:114.8–119.23).

turn" to God of all creation by "a way mysticall and supernaturall."¹⁷ The divine law revealed in Scripture is God's chosen means of completing a circular mediation of his own "externall working," the purpose of which is "the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant vertue: Which abundance doth shew it selfe in varietie, and for that cause this varietie is oftentimes in scripture exprest by the name of *riches*. *The Lord hath made all things for his owne sake.*"¹⁸

The works of both creation and redemption are linked to God's own Trinitarian self-reflection. All things proceed from and return to God by the divine Word. The utterance of the Word brings the world into being.¹⁹ The divine work of redemption "God in himselfe prepared before all worldes."²⁰ God is thus an end to himself in the process of both *exitus* and *reditus*. The seemingly endless, immeasurable diversity of life in its many forms is stabilized and contained by an order that is nothing less than the divine self-identity. Through the working of creation and redemption, the order of all things both originates and culminates in the one Eternal Law, hence the circular structure of this mediating process. Looked at another way, the natural law and the divine law are the two most essential moments in the self-mediating operation of the one Eternal Law. In this process of going out from and returning to God who is "the Eternal himselfe," nothing that is made can be said to fall outside the original order established in the one Eternal Law. In this sense, Hooker's threefold division of the idea of law is altogether comprehensive.

THE ETERNAL LAW: CREATION AND GOVERNMENT

If we will give judgement of the lawes under which wee live, first let that law eternall be alwayes before our eyes, as being of principall force and moment to breed in religious mindes a dutifull estimation of all lawes, the use and benefite whereof we see; because there can be no doubt but that lawes apparently good, are (as it were) thinges copied out of the very tables of that high everlasting law, even as the booke of that law hath sayd concerning it selfe, *By me Kinges raigne, and by me Princes decree justice.*²¹

The Eternal Law can be viewed from two principal standpoints according to the distinction between the internal and the external operations of God. The internal operations are themselves distinguishable into natural and necessary operations of the divine life, on the one hand, and God's voluntary works, on the other. The "necessary" internal operations have to do with the

¹⁷ *Lawes*, I.11.6 (1:118.15, 22).

¹⁸ *Lawes*, I.2.4 (1:61.6–10).

¹⁹ *Lawes*, I.3.2 (1:64.19).

²⁰ *Lawes*, I.11.6 (1:118.23).

²¹ *Lawes*, I.16.2 (1:136.4–11).

life of the Godhead as a Trinity of three persons in one eternal, divine substance. These workings are so intimately tied to the divine essence as to be above the power of the divine will. The “voluntary” internal operations, on the other hand, have to do with “that law eternall which God himself hath made to himselfe, and thereby worketh all things whereof he is the cause and author.” *Lawes*, I.2.5 (1:62.1) In a sense the latter looks toward the divine works which are *ad extra*, i.e., which fall outside the simple divine life, though these works are viewed as being contained within the will of their author. The Eternal Law as it governs the creation can also be viewed *externally* as the divine purpose “set downe as expedient to be kept by all his creatures according to the severall conditions wherwith he hath indued them.”²² In the latter case, the operation of God *ad extra* is viewed from the standpoint of the creatures rather than the Creator. On the basis of these two standpoints Hooker distinguishes a first and a second Eternal Law.

In the autograph manuscript of his *Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination*, Hooker observes that God’s external operation is twofold: creation and government.²³ Government naturally presupposes creation. The second Eternal Law is all about the government of God and in this sense corresponds more closely than the first Eternal Law to the teleological definition of Eternal Law in Question 93 of Aquinas’s *Summa*.²⁴ The chief difference between the first and second forms of the Eternal Law is therefore to be discerned in the relations that obtain among the worker, the law of the work, and the actual work done. In the case of the first Eternal Law, or “*creatio*,” they remain coequal because God establishes the order of his own voluntary working. In the second Eternal Law, or “*gubernatio*,” there is a necessary hierarchical subordination of the creaturely work to the Creator-lawgiver who both makes

²² *Lawes*, I.3.1 (1:63.9).

²³ Richard Hooker, *Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination*, *FLE*, 4:86.11–17, also printed in supplement 2, *FLE*, 3:527.12–18: “Operatio Dei ad extra est duplex: Creatio. Gubernatio. Gubernatio praesupponit creationem. Non enim gubernatur quod non est.”

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *The Treatise on Law in Summa Theologiae*, edited with introduction, Latin text, translation, and commentary by R. J. Henle, pp. 204, 205: “Sed contra est quod Augustinus dicit (*De Lib. Arb. i, 6*) quod *lex aeterna est summa ratio, cui semper obtemperandum est.*” [Augustine says that the Eternal Law is the supreme exemplar to which we must always conform.] Corpus:

Sicut ratio divinae sapientiae, inquantum per eam cuncta sunt creata, rationem habet artis, vel exemplaris, vel ideae, ita ratio divinae sapientiae moventis omnia ad debitum finem obtinet rationem legis. Et secundum hoc lex aeterna nihil aliud est quam ratio divinae sapientiae, secundum quod est directiva omnium actuum et motionum. [Just as the model in the Divine wisdom through which all things were created has the nature of an art or exemplar or idea, so the plan in the Divine wisdom which moves everything to its proper end has the nature of a law. And, accordingly, the Eternal Law is nothing other than the idea in Divine wisdom inasmuch as it directs all acts and movements.]

and is, as the divine Λογος, the law of making.²⁵ Hooker's remarks on the first Eternal Law are thus more properly reminiscent of the doctrine of God and *Logos* theology in the *prima pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas.²⁶

With this important theological distinction clarified, Hooker embarks on a more specific division of the various kinds of law with a general, teleological definition of law itself as his point of departure:

All things that are have some operation not violent or casual. Neither doth any thing ever begin to exercise the same without some foreconceaved ende for which it worketh. . . . That which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working, the same we tearme a Lawe.²⁷

In this account, law is represented as absolutely fundamental to everything that exists because everything in nature is governed one way or another by law.²⁸ The Eternal Law governs both the internal operations of the divine life and also the external divine works of creation and redemption of the world. God in himself is subject to law in the sense that “the beinge of God is a kind of law to his working: for that perfection which God is, geveth perfection to that he doth.”²⁹ That is to say, the divine operations are subject to the internal necessity of the divine nature. As an “intellectual worker” God governs himself, is indeed a law to himself.³⁰ In him law and activity are one and the same, for God is “verie *Onenesse*.” Yet in the unity of his substance God is understood to be both the “worker” and the “lawe” whereby his works are

²⁵ See Gibbs, “Introduction to Book I,” *FLE*, 6(I), p. 99.

²⁶ See W. J. Hankey, *God In Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). For an excellent account of Aquinas's employment of the *exitus et redditus* logic, see pp. 22–35. Hankey maintains against M.-D. Chenu that Christ alone is the *via* of return in Aquinas's argument. For Chenu, there are two returns in the Thomist theology, a natural one in the *Secunda Pars*, and one through gracious history: “The transition of *IIa* to the *IIIa Pars* is a passage from the order of the necessary to the order of the historical, from an account of structures to the actual story of God's gifts” (M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, trans. with authorized corrections and bibliographical additions by A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes [Montreal/Paris: Library of Living Catholic Thought, 1964], p. 315).

²⁷ *Lawes*, I.2.1 (1:58.22–29). This negative definition of law as an “operation not violent or casual” is a restatement of Aristotle's dictum that everything in nature acts for the sake of an end. For Hooker that end or τελος is nothing but law. See Aristotle's refutation of the view that chance and spontaneity are “causes” in *Physics*, 198a5–13 and 198b10 as well as his explanation that “Nature belongs to the class of causes which act for the sake of something,” beginning at 199a3–8. For further discussion of this definition see Arthur S. McGrade's introduction to his edition of Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Preface, Book I, Book VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. xx–xxii.

²⁸ *Lawes*, I.2.2 (1:58.33).

²⁹ *Lawes*, I.2.2 (1:59.5–6).

³⁰ *Lawes*, I.2.3 (1:60.8).

wrought. In the case of all other forms these “moments” are ontologically separate. In God himself, the mediation of the moments is dependent upon a Trinitarian understanding of the divine nature.³¹

There are three elements to be considered in the divine operation: the worker himself, the pattern of the work, and the actual act of working. According to Hooker’s orthodox Trinitarian logic, these three continue to be undivided in the unity of the divine substance, for God, by the necessity of his own nature, can have nothing in himself but himself. In the language of the Athanasian Creed, all three moments “are coeternal together and co-equal.”³² Hooker maintains that the internal operations of the Godhead as a Trinity of distinct persons within the unity of one divine substance are the supreme expression of law. At this highest level there is no externality of ruler, rule, and ruling. On this account the *generation* of the Son and the *procession* of the Spirit are the most perfect operations expressive of the first Eternal Law. It is essential to Trinitarian orthodoxy that these operations are *involuntary* for they belong by internal necessity to the triune nature of the Godhead. Although Hooker is reluctant to wade more deeply into these internal operations of the Godhead—on this subject “our safest eloquence is silence”—nonetheless he is clearly intent on establishing the source of law at the highest possible ontological level.

For Hooker also the pagan philosophers were able to attain to a knowledge of the nature of God and of his Law.³³ Hooker cites the example of Plato’s demiurge who brings the visible world into being according to a plan or pattern (*παραδείγμα*) which is its own thought.³⁴ In this philosopher’s ac-

³¹ According to the *Articles of Religion*, article I, “Of Faith in the Holy Trinity”: “there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” The reference to the two divine names “Maker” and “Preserver” alludes to the *duplex operatio dei ad extra*, namely creation and governance. See Hooker, *Notes toward a Fragment on Predestination*, FLE, 4:86.11.

³² See “The Creed of St. Athanasius, commonly so called,” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), v. 26.

³³ *Laws*, I.2.3 (1:59.33–60.14):

the wise and learned among the verie Heathens themselves, have all acknowledged some first cause, whereupon originallie the being of all things dependeth. Neither have they otherwise spoken of that cause, then as an Agent, which knowing *what* and *why* it worketh, observeth in working a most exact *order* or *lawe* . . . all confess in the working of that first cause, that *counsel* is used, *reason* followed, a *way* observed, that is to say, constant *order* and *law* is kept, whereof it selfe must needs be author unto it selfe.

³⁴ See the *Timaeus*, 37d, trans. Benjamin Jowett, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 1167:

The nature of the ideal being was everlasting, but to bestow this attribute in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore [the demiourgos] resolved to have a moving

count of creation, the visible world is a “moving image of eternity.” The divine worker is manifested through his work. Mercurius Trismegistus, who was thought in the sixteenth century to be an ancient Egyptian teacher of universal philosophy, maintained that the world was made not with hands, but by Reason ($\lambda\omega\gamma\varpi$).³⁵ Cicero too defines Law as “something eternal which rules the whole universe by its wisdom in command and prohibition.”³⁶ In each of Hooker’s references to pagan authors the same principle is revealed: order or law is a divine, and therefore self-mediating rational principle—“Neither have they otherwise spoken of their cause, then as an Agent, which knowing *what* and *why* it worketh, observeth in working a most exact *order or lawe*” (*Lawes*, I.2.3 [1:59.33]).

Thus at the very highest level of both pagan and Christian theology, law is manifest as an eternal, self-originating, self-mediating principle in which there is a distinction of the agent, the principle or rule of action, and the action or operation itself. Quite remarkably, Hooker seems to suggest in this passage that a *Logos* theology can be discerned in the pagan understanding of Law as the divine first principle and perhaps also, by implication, an adumbration of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Homer, Plato, the Stoics, and no less an authority than Thrice-great Hermes are all enlisted in support of the proposition implicit in these expressions of *Logos* theology, namely that God *is* Law.³⁷ From the standpoint of the natural knowledge of God, the conclusion reached is much the same: the life of God is the very substance of Law. Hooker identifies the light of reason with the divine *Logos* of the Prologue to John’s Gospel. Here the “word” of God in Scripture is twinned with the “word” of rational human discourse in and through their common source, the eternal divine “Word.”³⁸ God the “light of light” is the author of

image of eternity, and when he set in order the heaven, he made this image eternal but moving according to number, while eternity itself rests in unity, and this image we call time. . . . Time and the heaven came into being at the same instant.

³⁵ On Hooker’s use of the *Hermetica* see Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 238–239.

³⁶ *De Legibus*, 2.6. See Loeb Classical Library edition, trans. C. W. Keyes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 379–381.

³⁷ *Lawes*, I.2.3 (1:60.4–11). Hooker derives his references to Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Stoics from the fifth-century Stobaeus’s *Eclogues*. See P. G. Stanwood, “Stobaeus and Classical Borrowing in the Renaissance,” *Neophilologus* 59 (1975): 141–146.

³⁸ *Lawes*, III.9.3 (1:238.25): “The light of naturall understanding wit and reason is from God, he it is which thereby doth illuminate every man entering into the world. If there proceede from us any thing afterwards corrupt and naught, the mother thereof is our owne darknes, neither doth it proceede from any such cause whereof God is the author. He is the author of all that we thinke or doe by vertue of that light, which himselfe hath given” (John 1:5).

both the light of reason and the revealed light of the Scriptures (*Lawes*, III.8.9; 1:226.11–14).³⁹ God, the author of nature, speaks through nature whose voice is His instrument.⁴⁰

Knowledge of the Eternal Law as a divine principle of self-imposed order is, as we have seen, variously accessible by supernatural revelation, philosophical reflection, or through the poetical inspiration of the Muses which may lie somewhere between the other two. Looked at more systematically, Hooker presents the knowledge of the Eternal Law according to the *duplex cognitio dei*. It is important to qualify the degree of knowledge. For Hooker the substance of the Eternal Law is altogether beyond our grasp. At this highest level of the inquiry into the essence of law, theology must be apophatic, for “dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade farre into the doings of the most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name: yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as in deed he is, neither can know him . . . his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity to reach.”⁴¹ Unlike the book of Nature or the book of Scripture, the first Eternal Law is likened to a book which “we are neither able nor worthy to open and look into.”⁴² Nevertheless, Hooker maintains that we are able to know the universality, the eternity, and the immutability of this law. Scripture reveals that God’s hidden counsel is a “thing unchangeable.”⁴³

God himself is law, both to himself and to all other things besides. The first Eternal Law comprises both the inward and the outward actions of God. As we have already observed, even in his external working God continues to be an end to himself, for the end of this external labor is nothing other than “the exercise of his most glorious and most abundant vertue.”⁴⁴ In the out-

³⁹ See *Lawes*, V.56.2 (2:235.25–27): “The Sonne [is] in the father as light in that light out of which it floweth without separation; the father [is] in the Sonne as light in that light which it causeth and leaveth not.”

⁴⁰ *Lawes*, I.8.3 (1:84.4), and see also I.3.4 (1:67.16–20, 68.18): “Those things which nature is said to do, are by divine arte performed, using nature as an instrument: nor is there any such arte or knowledge divine in nature her selfe working, but in the guide of natures worke.” Compare Calvin, *Comm. on Hab. 2:6*, CO, 43.540.1; *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, trans. John Owen, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1950), pp. 92–93: “Since some principles of equity and justice remain in the hearts of men, the consent of all nations is, as it were, the *voice of nature* or the testimony of that equity which is engraven on the hearts of men, and which they can never obliterate. This also is the *dictate of nature*” [italics mine].

⁴¹ *Lawes*, I.2.2 (1:59.12–19).

⁴² *Lawes*, I.2.5 (1:62.10). See also *Notes on Predestination*, FLE, 4:85.15: “Scientia divina est liber in quo scripta sunt *omnia etiam nomina*, quibus nihil magis contingentur evenit.” [Divine knowledge is a book in which are written the *very names of all men*, than which nothing more contingent exists.]

⁴³ Heb. 6:17.

⁴⁴ “Virtue” has the connotation here of power and strength.

ward exercise of his power or “virtue,” God works voluntarily, though now under a self-imposed law. This law is manifest in every voluntary act of the Creator. Thus, underlying the great act of creation there is a self-mediated action of the lawgiver who wills to act according to a rational purpose.⁴⁵ As distinct from the purely internal operations discussed above, there is necessarily a separation of the worker and the work in the outward acts of God. In the outward acts there is a disproportion between the law of operation and the operation itself; the former is infinite whereas the latter is finite.⁴⁶ Thus an externality of law and the operation ruled by it comes about in “everie acte proceeding externally from God.” The worker and the rule of operation continue to be coequal. Reason and Will are perfectly united in the outward expression of the Eternal Law.⁴⁷ The Eternal Law, however, imposes no limitation on the freedom of the divine will. The law whereby the world is created and governed is voluntarily self-imposed; the first Eternal Law is “that order which God before all ages hath set down with himselfe, for himselfe to do all things by.”⁴⁸

Hooker states that this *Logos* theology is not the customary account given of the Eternal Law.⁴⁹ The more usual definition of Eternal Law is, for example, the one formulated by Augustine in *De Libero Arbitrio* and cited by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*: “The Eternal Law is the supreme exemplar (*summa ratio*) to which we must always conform.”⁵⁰ Aquinas comments on

⁴⁵ Some interpreters of Hooker have argued that his theology is realist as opposed to voluntarist. Yet here it is clear that the divine will is an integral element alongside the divine reason in the doctrine of Eternal Law. See Lee W. Gibbs, “Introduction to Book I,” *FLE*, 6(I), pp. 97, 103. See also Peter Munz, *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 140 ff. and W. J. Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker’s Doctrine*, pp. 13–15.

⁴⁶ *Lawes*, I.2.5 (1:61.15–18): “Undoubtedly a proper and certaine reason there is of every finite work of God, in as much as there is a law imposed upon it; which if there were not, it should be infinite even as the worker himselfe is.”

⁴⁷ See Gibbs, “Introduction to Book I,” *FLE*, 6(I), p. 97.

⁴⁸ *Lawes*, I.2.6 (1:63.2).

⁴⁹ *Lawes*, I.3.1 (1:63.6–17):

I am not ignorant that by law eternall the learned for the most part do understand the order, not which God hath eternallie purposed himselfe in all his works to observe, but rather that which with himselfe he hath set downe as expedient to be kept by all his creatures, according to the severall conditions wherewith he hath indued them. They who thus are accustomed to speake apply the name of Lawe unto that only rule of working which superior authority imposeth, whereas we somewhat more enlarging the sense thereof, terme any kind of rule or canon whereby actions are framed a law. Now that law which as it is laid up in the bosome of God, they call *eternall*, receyveth according unto the different kinds of things which are subject unto it differencē and sundry kinds of names.

⁵⁰ *De Lib. Arb.*, I.6, cited by Thomas Aquinas, *The Treatise on Law* in *Summa Theologiae*, p. 204: “Lex aeterna est summa ratio, cui semper obtemperandum est.”

this definition by observing that the divine plan that directs every creature to its appointed end has the nature of a law just as the model or pattern in the divine wisdom through which all things were created has the nature of an exemplar: "Accordingly, the Eternal Law is nothing other than the idea in Divine wisdom inasmuch as it directs all acts and movements."⁵¹ The emphasis here is on the teleological ordering of the creation to its proper end. Augustine may well have obtained his definition from Cicero's treatise on law where he too defines law as "the highest reason implanted in nature (*ratio summa insita in natura*)."⁵²

THE SECOND ETERNAL LAW

The great variety of laws that make up the grand scheme of Hooker's generic division are all gathered together under the governance of the second Eternal Law which "receyveth according unto the different kinds of things which are subject unto it different and sundry kinds of names."⁵³ The second Eternal Law comprises the law of irrational natural agents, angelic law, the law of reason, human positive law, the law of nations, as well as the revealed law of Scripture. All of these forms of law are distinct expressions of the one and undivided *Gubernatio Dei*. In the *Notes toward a fragment on Predestination*, Hooker goes on to distinguish between various species of this *gubernatio*:

Government is that work of God whereby he *sustains created things* and disposes all things *to the end which he naturally chooses*, that is *the greatest good* which, *given the law of creation*, can be elicited. For, given the law of creation <is the rule of all> it was not fitting that creation be violated through those things which follow from creation. So God does nothing by his government which offends against that which he has framed and ratified by the very act of creation. The government of God is: general over all; special over rational creatures. There are two forms of government: that which would have been, had free creation not lost its way; that which is now when it has lost its way.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Treatise on Law*, p. 205.

⁵² *De Legibus*, 1.4., p. 317.

⁵³ *Lawes*, 1.3.1 (1:63.16). Compare Aquinas, *Treatise on Law*, Q. 93, art. 1, p. 200: "But things that are diverse in themselves are considered as one according to their ordination to something common. There, the Eternal Law is one, that is the exemplar of this ordination."

⁵⁴ John Booty's translation of Hooker's Latin notes in *FLE*, 4:86.28–87.12.

Gubernatio est ea Dei operatio qua res *creatatas sustentat* disponitque omnia *in finem ab ipso naturaliter expetitum id est maximum bonum quod posita creationis lege potest elici*. Etenim posita creationis lex <est regula omnium> per ea quae secuta sunt creationem violare non decuit. Nihil itaque operatur Deuos [sic] gubernando contra id quod creando fixum ratumque habuit. Gubernatio Dei: Generale super omnia; Speciale super creaturas rationales. Gubernationis duplex modus: Qui fuisset si creatura libera non exorbitasset; Qui nunc est cum exorbitarit.

This passage reveals the theological principle underlying the generic division of laws. On one side are laws governing the order of unfallen creation. Among these Hooker includes the law of nature insofar as it governs irrational and nonvoluntary natural agents. This again is a significant departure from the usual, more restricted sense of natural law as an “intellectual habit” of the soul, that is to say the *summa ratio* as it is present and known to rational creatures.⁵⁵ The “law celestial” is natural law as observed by unfallen rational creatures, namely the angels. The “law of reason” is natural law for rational human creatures.

To be understood properly, the natural law must be considered in relation both to its originative source, the Eternal Law, and its twin, as it were, the revealed law of Scripture. Scripture attests to the common source of these *summa genera* of law in God himself: “Doth not the Apostle term the law of nature even as the Evangelist doth the law of Scripture, ‘δικαιώμα τοῦ θεοῦ, Gods own righteous ordinance?’”⁵⁶ These two primary derivative forms of law together account for both the “outward procession” of the entire created order *from* and its final redemptive return by a “way mystical and supernaturall” *to* the original divine unity.⁵⁷ The Eternal Law is thus both the starting point ($\alpha\omega\chi\eta$) and the goal ($\tau\epsilon\lambda\omega\zeta$) of all order. Natural law and divine law represent for Hooker the two motions of cosmic procession and return and in this way the two *summa genera* constitute a comprehensive division of the idea of law.⁵⁸ The natural law is God’s means of preserving the order of

⁵⁵ See, for example, Aquinas’s discussion of the definition of natural law in the *Treatise on Law*, Q. 94, art. 1, pp. 235–241; also, Cicero, *De Legibus*, 1.4, Loeb, 317, quoted in Commentary, *FLE*, 6(1), p. 477: “lex est ratio summa insita in natura, quae jubet ea, quae facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria. Eadem ratio cum est hominis mente confirmata et confessa, lex est.” [Law is the highest reason, implanted in Nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the opposite. This reason, when firmly fixed and fully developed in the human mind, is Law.] Finally, Gratian, *Decretum*, Part I, Distinct. 1., in A. L. Richter and A. Friedberg, *Corpus juris canonici*, I (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1879), p. 2: “Natural law is that which is contained in the Law and the Gospel whereby everyone is commanded to do to another that which he would have done to himself.” Hooker cites Gratian’s definition at *Lawes*, 1.12.1 (1:119.30–120.1).

⁵⁶ Rom. 1:32 and Luk. 1:6. See *Lawes*, VII.11.10 (3:211.12). Earlier in the same passage Hooker’s purpose is to justify the discourse of reason in determining the polity of the Church. See further VII.11.10 (1:210.27–211.6).

⁵⁷ Cp. *Lawes*, 1.16.1 (1:135.11–13) and III.11.3 (1:248.23–26).

⁵⁸ For further examples of Hooker’s employment of the Neoplatonic language and logic of “procession,” see *Lawes*, I.3.2 (1:65.4); 1.3.4 (1:67.29) and (1:68.6–8); 1.5.2 (1:73.5–8). At the latter he states: “Againe sith there can bee no goodnesse desired which proceedeth not from God himselfe, as from the supreme cause of all things; and every effect doth after a sort conteine, at least wise resemble the cause from which it proceedeth: all things in the worlde are saide in some sort to seeke the highest, and to covet more or lesse the participation of God himselfe.” The Neoplatonic logic of “procession” is aptly summarized by Proclus as follows: “every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and returns to it” (*The Elements of Theology*, p. 38).

the world once created; it is effectively the Eternal Law as kept by all creatures. Had Adam continued in his unfallen state, the natural law would have sufficed to bring him to “the reward of blisse.” In the divine law of Scripture God reveals his chosen means of restoring fallen creation to unity with himself.⁵⁹ This revealed way of redemption is also an expression of the one Eternal Law and is described by Hooker as prepared by God in himself before all worlds (*Lawes*, I.11.6; 1:118.23). We shall seek to demonstrate that Hooker’s conservative Neoplatonic presentation of this twofold division of the Eternal Law manifests in content the essentially Lutheran structure of the two realms of creation and redemption.⁶⁰

By the unaided illumination of natural reason, it is possible to distinguish true from false, good from evil, and consequently a certain degree of knowledge of the divine will itself is attainable without the help of supernatural revelation. This natural knowledge of God consequently leads to a natural practical wisdom. To know theologically what human nature is and where it stands in the larger order of creation is the starting point for reflection upon the principles of human action (*Lawes*, I.8.6; 1:86.25–29). In this context Hooker is able to compare the virtue of voluntary obedience to the natural law on the part of rational creatures with the external beauty of the hierarchically ordered cosmos (*Lawes*, I.8.9; 1:89.31–90.11). Building on this argument with respect to the natural knowledge of God, he proceeds to show that one and the same moral law is taught by Plato, Aristotle, Moses, and Christ with respect to our *natural* duty both toward God and our fellow man (*Lawes*, I.8.7, 8; 1:87.9–89.2). The second great commandment in Christ’s summary of the law, for example, is grounded in the law of noncontradiction, a law of the rational faculty. Throughout this discussion of the axioms of virtuous action Hooker presupposes that “the mindes even of naturall men, have atteyned to know, not onely that there is a God, but also what power, force, wisedom, and other properties God hath, and how all things depende on him” (*Lawes*, I.8.7; 1:87.14–17).⁶¹

Given that rational, free creation has lost its “way” on account of the Fall, it is necessary to the preservation of the created order that there be a special

⁵⁹ *Lawes*, I.11.5, 6 (1:115.25–119.23).

⁶⁰ On the significance for Christian ethics of Luther’s distinction between the realms of creation and redemption, see William H. Lazareth, “Luther’s ‘Two Kingdom’ Ethic Reconsidered,” in *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World*, ed. John C. Bennett (New York: Association Press, 1966); reprinted in *Marburg Revisited: A Reexamination of Lutheran and Reformed Traditions*, eds. Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1966), pp. 165–176. The latter edition is cited here.

⁶¹ See W. David Neelands, “Scripture, Reason and ‘Tradition,’” *RHC*, pp. 76, 77.

revelation from God in the divine law of the Scriptures, both through the law and the prophets and through the gospel of Christ. Finally there is need of positive "humane law" or "such lawes of government as serve to direct even nature depraved to a right end."⁶² The latter can be further divided into categories of civil, ecclesiastical and international law, of which the latter contains within it the laws of arms and embassage. Special law, for example, governing the authority of general councils of the church can be regarded as a hybrid species of ecclesiastical law and the law of nations.⁶³ The subdivision can certainly go a great deal further.

The chief point to observe is that the structure of the division is theologically determined by three main distinctions. First there is the twofold character of God's external operation as "Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible."⁶⁴ God's work as Creator is distinct from his work as Governor, hence the distinction of the first and second Eternal Laws. Second, there is a distinction between God's general government over all creatures and a special government over rational creatures. Out of the latter arises the distinction between the main species of natural law. Finally, the mode of the special divine government over rational creatures is itself twofold on account of the Fall. The natural law is both a law of reason and the pattern for positive human law. Human law serves as a remedy for sin.⁶⁵ Both positive human law and the divine law presuppose the corruption of human nature, so that they are posterior to the laws that suppose a free creation that has *not* lost its way. It is therefore structurally appropriate that Hooker's discussion of the divine law immediately follows upon the treatment of positive human law. With the various forms of human law, the descent, as it were, from the perfection of the Eternal Law is complete.

Knowledge of the Creator, however, is not to be confused with knowledge of the Redeemer, yet the complete account of law demands recognition of both species of knowing. Only through the supernatural revelation of the Scriptures is it possible to hope for a participation of the divine nature. Scripture alone can reveal the supernatural way of salvation, the final "return" to the original "author fountain cause of justice":

⁶² *Lawes*, I.10.1; 1:96.33.

⁶³ See *Lawes*, I.10.14 (1:109.2–110.16) where Hooker refers to the "lawes of spirituall commerce betweene Christian nations."

⁶⁴ Article I, "Of faith in the Holy Trinity," in the *Articles of Religion*.

⁶⁵ *Lawes*, I.10.13 (1:108.3–7): ". . . those lawes of reason which (man retayning his original integritie) had bene sufficient to direct each particular person in all his affaires and duties, are not sufficient but require the accesse of other lawes, now that man and his offspring are growne thus corrupt and sinfull."

The light of nature is never able to finde out any way of obtaining the reward of blisse, but by performing exactly the duties and works of righteousness. From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisedome of God hath revealed a way mysticall and supernaturall . . . concerning that faith hope and charitie without which there can be no salvation; was there ever any mention made saving only in that lawe which God him selfe hath from heaven revealed?⁶⁶

Only by divine grace can the soul attain to a saving knowledge whereby it might participate in the divine nature and “live as it were the life of God” (*Lawes*, I.11.2; 1:112.20). Owing to man’s willful rejection of the order of creation, the natural law by itself is insufficient to secure the unity of the cosmos under God. With a marked Augustinian emphasis, Hooker notes that fallen humanity continues to possess a *natural* desire to be happy (*Lawes*, I.11.4; 1:114.8–10), and thus desires to be reunited with the eternal source of order; yet, on account of original sin, man is “inwardly obstinate, rebellious and averse from all obedience unto the sacred lawes of his nature . . . in regard of his depraved mind little better then a wild beast” (*Lawes*, I.10.1; 1:96.26–29). Thus observance of the natural law is no longer effectual in preserving the divinely constituted order of creation. According to Aristotle, “it is an axiome of nature that natural desire cannot utterly be frustrate.”⁶⁷ Reason cannot escape the predicament of desiring both a participation of the divine nature while, at the same time, being constitutionally incapable of finding its way to the consummation of its own deepest longing.⁶⁸ While nature demands a “more divine perfection,” the means whereby this perfection is attained cannot themselves be natural. Thus the redemption or mystical “return” to God of all creation can only be by supernatural means. Thus the divine law is the means of ensuring that nothing whatsoever in the created order falls outside the divine governance. By this account the cyclic rhythm of *processio* and *reditus* from the One and to the One is perfect and complete.

⁶⁶ *Lawes*, I.11.5, 6 (1:118.11–15,119.12–15). See also *Pride*, FLE, 5:341.3–9.

⁶⁷ *Lawes*, I.11.4 (1:114.15). Hooker cites the Proemium of Aquinas’s commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics. See Thomas Aquinas, *Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio in duodecim libros*, p. 6. That nature does nothing in vain is a central doctrine of Aristotle’s Physics. See *De Caelo*, 271a34. See *Comm.*, FLE, 6(I), p. 513.

⁶⁸ The classic discussion of this predicament is found in Augustine’s *Confessions*. See the account of the “natural weight” of the soul in *Conf.* XIII.ix.10, 11.

III

The Context of Patristic Authority: The Paradigm of Chalcedonian Christology in Richard Hooker's Discourse on Salvation and the Church¹

For as much as there is no union of God with man without that meane
betweene both which is both, it seemeth requisite [to] consider how
God is in Christ, then how Christ is in us.²

In the dedicatory preface to the fifth book of his treatise *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, Richard Hooker remarks that “the waightiest conflicts the Church hath had were those which touched the head, the person of our Saviour Christ, and the next of importance those questions which are at this daie [i.e., the period of the Reformation and its aftermath] betweene us and the Church of Rome about the *actions* of the body of the church of God . . .”³ The great actions of the church disputed in the sixteenth century have to do principally with the manner and the means of our participation in God’s own life.⁴ The communication of God’s grace to humanity was opened up to rigorous scrutiny in Luther’s formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The doctrine of the church was radically recast as a logical consequence

¹ This essay was delivered as a paper at the seventeenth Atlantic Theological Conference held in Fredericton, New Brunswick in June, 1997.

² *Lawes*, V.50.3 (2:228.22–209.1).

³ *Lawes*, V, Dedication §3 (2:2.15–19). Hooker is of course referring in the first instance to the Christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries. He discusses at considerable length “the maner how God and man are united in one Christ” in *Lawes*, V.51.1.1–56.13 (2:209.8–244.25). For a clear account of Hooker’s polemic directed toward the Tridentine soteriology, see Egil Grislis, “Introduction to Commentary: Tractates and Sermons,” *FLE*, 5:634–641.

⁴ That is to say, the principal theological question of the Reformation in Hooker’s estimation is properly *soteriological*.

of the rethinking of the doctrine of salvation.⁵ Furthermore, the soteriology and the ecclesiology of the Reformation are intimately linked to that “weightier conflict” touching the manner of the union of God and man in one Christ. Indeed, Chalcedonian Christological orthodoxy provides a governing paradigm for Hooker along with other magisterial reformers in their approach to the doctrines of salvation and the church.

Hooker in particular is highly conscious of the importance of this link between Christology on the one hand and the doctrines of salvation and the church on the other. As he points out in his introduction to a discussion of the sacraments, it is first necessary to consider how God is in Christ in order to consider how Christ is in us.⁶ According to his thoroughly Aristotelian formulation,

For as to take away the first efficient of our being were to annihilate utterly our persons, so we cannot remove the last final cause of our working . . . something there must be desired for it selfe simple and for no other . . . Nothing may be infinitely desired but that good which in deed is infinite, and no good is infinite but God: therefore he [is] our felicitie and blisse. If then we be blessed, it is by force of *participation* and conjunction with him . . . Then are we happy therefore when fully we injoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied even with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God.⁷

For Hooker, indeed as for the other magisterial reformers—Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Bullinger—the question of the manner and means of this complete union of souls with God is rooted ultimately in the interpretation of the cardinal doctrine “that God is in Christ by the personal incarnation of the Sonne who is very God.”⁸

CHRISTOLOGY AND THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

The logic of reformed soteriology appears, at least initially, paradoxical. How can the grace of justification leave man still in the condition of a sinner?

⁵ See P. D. L. Avis, *The Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (London, 1981), pp. 13–24.

⁶ “And for as much as there is no union of God with man without the meane betwene both which is both, it seemeth requisite that wee first consider how God is in Christ, then how christ is in us” (*Lawes*, V.50.3; 2:208.22–209.1).

⁷ *Lawes*, I.11.1 (1:111.23; 112.20). For Aristotle, “to partake in the eternal and divine is the goal towards which all things strive” (*De Anima*, 2.4; 415b; quoted in Booty, *FLE*, 6: Comm., 2:234.33).

⁸ *Lawes*, V.51.1 (2:209.4).

How can there be a perfect and immediate imputation of Christ's righteousness while, at the same time, the soul must acquire the virtues by degrees in an incremental progress toward sanctification? How do these two kinds of righteousness of the reformed theology of grace, namely justification and sanctification, remain wholly distinct and yet continue in unity both in their source, that is to say in Christ, and in the souls of Christian believers?⁹ For Hooker, this is no paradox, but rather the very consequence of the manner in which the human nature of Christ is joined to his divinity. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is represented by him as the objective means of salvation. As he observes: "There is cause sufficient why divine nature should assume human nature, that so God might be in Christ reconciling to him self the world."¹⁰ For Hooker, the precise theological definition of the perfect union between the two natures is authoritatively defined by the orthodox Christology summarized at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.¹¹ The so-called Chalcedonian definition had significant implications for the subsequent interpretation of the union between Christ and fallen humanity as defined by reformed soteriology.

Hooker's account of patristic Christological orthodoxy is succinct and concise; it is worth citing this summary at length:

To gather therefore into one summe all that hetherto hath bene spoken touchinge this pointe, there are but fower thinges which concurre to make compleate the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ, his deitie, his manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other beinge joyned in one. Fower principall heresies there are which have in those things withstanded the truth, Arians by bendinge them selves against the deitie of Christ; Apollinarians by maiminge and

⁹ For a learned and useful general account of this pivotal doctrine of the Reformation see Alister E. McGrath's magisterial study *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, vol. 2, "From 1500 to the present day" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1–134. For discussion of Hooker's soteriology, see Egil Grislis, "Introduction to Commentary," §5, *Hooker's Theology*, *FLE*, 5:649–655. See also Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Faith and Works: Cranmer and Hooker on Justification* (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982) and C. FitzSimons Allison, *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter* (New York: Seabury, 1966).

¹⁰ *Lawes*, V.51.3 (2:211.1).

¹¹ See *Lawes*, V.54.10 (2:226.22–227.18). On Hooker's extensive use of patristic sources in the *Lawes*, see William P. Haugaard, "Introduction to Books II, III and IV," *FLE* 6(1):143–148 and John Booty, "Introduction to Book V," *FLE*, 6(1):206. See also John K. Luoma, "Who Owns the Fathers? Hooker and Cartwright on the Authority of the Primitive Church," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 8 (1977): 45–59 and William P. Haugaard, "Renaissance Patristic Scholarship and Theology in Sixteenth-Century England," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 10 (1979): 37–60. On Hooker's adherence to the doctrine of the four great general councils of the Early Church, see J. S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition* (Sewanee, Tenn.: University Press, University of the South, 1963), chapter 14.

misinterpretinge that which belongeth to his humane nature; Nestorians by rentinge Christ asunder and devidinge him into two persons; the followers of Eutiches by confoundinge in his person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have bene fower most famous ancient generall Councils, the Council of Nice to define against the Arians, against Apollinarians the Councell of Constantynople, the Council of Ephesus against Nestorians, against Eutichians the Chalcedon Councell. In fower word ἀληθῶς, τελέως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀσυγχύτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*; the first applied to his beinge God, and the seconde to his beinge man, the third to his beinge of both one, and the fourthe to his still continuinge in that one both, wee may fullie by way of abridgment comprise whatsoever antiquitie hath at large handled either in declaration of Christian belief or in refutation of the foresaid heresies. Within the compasse of which fower heades I may trulie affirme, that all heresies, which touch but the person of Jesus Christ, whether they have risen in these later days, or in any age heretofore, may be with great facilitie brought to confine them selves. Wee conclude therefore that to save the world it was of necessitie the Sonne of God should be thus incarnate, and that god should so be in Christ as hath bene declared.¹²

Following this summary of the Christological controversies of the early church, Hooker devotes a substantial chapter to an explanation of the continuing integrity of both the human and divine natures such “that by the union of the one with the other nature in Christ there groweth neither gaine nor losse of essential properties in either.”¹³ Christ’s assumption of manhood does not transmute or abolish in any way the characteristics peculiar and essential to human nature. The union of the natures subsists in the category of “personhood”:

The sequell of which conjunction of natures in the person of Christ is no abolishment of naturall properties apperteininge to either substance, no transition or transmigration thereof out of one substance into an other, finallie no such mutuall infusion as reallie causeth the same naturall operations or properties to be made common unto both substances, but whatsoever is naturall to deitie the same remayneth in Christ uncommunicated unto his manhood, and whatsoever naturall to manhood his deitie thereof is uncapable.¹⁴

Thus also in Christ’s *soteriological* union with fallen humanity, there is no

¹² *Lawes*, V.54.10 (2.226.22–227.15).

¹³ *Lawes*, V.53.1 (2:216.19–21).

¹⁴ *Lawes*, V.53.1 (2:216.22–29).

abolition of the “naturall properties” which constitute that nature.¹⁵ This doctrine is invoked by Hooker in his notes in the margin of *A Christian Letter* against the accusation that he upheld the doctrine of free will.¹⁶ The issue concerns the relation between divine grace and human free will. Hooker had argued in the first book of the *Lawes* that “there is in the will of man naturallie that freedome, whereby it is apt to take or refuse anie particular object, whatsoever being presented unto it.”¹⁷ In the margin of *A Christian Letter* Hooker penned a quick response:

There are certaine woordes as Nature, Reason, Will and such like which wheresoever you find named you suspect them presently as bugs wordes, because what they mean you doe not in deed as you ought apprehend. You have heard that mans Nature is corrupt his reason blind his will perverse. *Whereupon under coulor of condemning corrupt nature you condemn nature* and so in the rest. [italics mine]¹⁸

His response to this issue is developed in the *Dublin Fragment* on “Grace and Free Will.”¹⁹ Hooker asks “must the will cease to be itselfe because the grace of God helpeth it?”²⁰ Just as Christ’s assumption of human nature does not destroy the essential properties belonging to that nature, so also grace, when communicated to fallen humanity, does not destroy the “naturall powers” of the human soul. On the contrary, they are regenerated by this communication of grace. Thus, according to Hooker,

Freedom of operation wee have by nature, butt the abilitie of vertuous operation by grace, because through sinne our nature hath taken that disease and weaknes, whereby *of itselfe it inclineth only unto evil*. The naturall powers and faculties therefore of mans minde are through our native corruption soe weakened and of themselves so averse from God,

¹⁵ *Lawes*, V.56.9 (2:241.9–18). Compare *Pride*, *FLE*, 5:326.25–327.6 where Hooker appeals to the doctrine of the “extra-Calvinisticum” in order to uphold the distinction of natures maintained in the soul’s participation in Christ: “For are not wee and Christ personallie distinguished? Are we not locallie divided and severed each from other?” On the “mutual participation which is betweene Christe and the Church of Christ in this present worlde,” see John Booty, “Richard Hooker” in *The Spirit of Anglicanism* (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), pp. 17–29.

¹⁶ *FLE*, 4:17.16–19.16.

¹⁷ *Lawes*, I.7.6 (1:79.27–29).

¹⁸ *FLE*, 4:17.22–29. Above this remark Hooker refers to “Dionys. p. 338,” a reference to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite’s *On the Divine Names* where evil is defined as the “deficiency of good.” See note in *FLE*, 4:193. According to Dionysius, “nothing in the world is utterly destitute of Good, then the Divine Providence is in all things, and nothing that exists can be without It.”

¹⁹ *FLE*, 4:101–113. See Egil Grislis, “The Role of Consensus in Richard Hooker’s Method of Theological Inquiry,” in *The Heritage of Christian Thought*, ed. R. E. Cushman and E. Grislis (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 74–75.

²⁰ *FLE*, 4:101.6.

that without the influence of his special grace, they bring forth nothing in his sight acceptable, noe nott the blossoms or least budds *that tende to the fruit of eternal life.* [italics mine]²¹

The union between fallen humanity and Christ is consequently not a transmigration out of its own nature into the divine substance.²² According to the Chalcedonian Christological paradigm, the human is regenerated and sanctified by the grace of union. The Reformation doctrine of the two kinds of righteousness is firmly grounded in this Christological model. By the grace of justification, the soul is “in Christ,” and shares in his divine perfection; by the grace of sanctification, Christ works “in the soul” and thus the human is brought by degrees to perfection in the life of virtue. Yet the soul and Christ must never be confused with one another in this account of soteriological union.²³ Hooker’s brief rule concerning the questions about the union of natures in Christ thus provides a useful insight into the logic of his doctrine of grace: “of both natures there is a *cooperation* often, an *association* always, but never any mutual *participation* whereby the properties of the one are infused into the other.”²⁴

The doctrine of salvation poses a problem of mediation fundamentally analogous to that addressed by the Chalcedonian definition. The anthropological starting point for the reformers was the conviction of man’s total corruption and sinfulness, which was the consequence of the Fall. An infinite gulf was seen to divide an utterly depraved, fallen humanity from their infinitely righteous and perfect Creator. The problem of salvation was understood to depend on the problem of the ontological mediation between man and God across this gulf. Hooker’s account of this gulf in terms of the soul’s total depravity is unmistakably reformed:

And sinne hath twoe measures whereby the greatnes therof is judged. The object, God against whome: and the subject, that creature in

²¹ FLE, 4:103.10–17.

²² As John Booty argues, “by ‘participation’ Hooker does not mean fusion, absorption, or deification (*θεωσις*), nor does he refer to a casual relationship or kinship (*ομογένεια*).” Rather it is a “‘mysticall communion’ (2:340.11) that involves the deification of human nature, not turning human nature into deity, but making our nature the Deity’s ‘owne inseparable habitation.’” See the “Introduction to Book V,” FLE, 6(1):198–199.

²³ See *Lawes*, V.56.9 (2:241.11–13) and 5.56.10 (2:242.17–26):

And because the divine substance of Christ is equallie in all, his human substance equallie distant from all, it appeareth that the participation of Christ wherein there are manie degrees and differences must needs consist in such effectes as beinge derived from both natures of Christ reallie into us are made our own, and wee by hayinge them in us are trulie saide to have him from whome they come, Christ also more or lesse to inhabit and imparthe him selfe as the graces are fewer or moe, greater or smaller, which reallie flowe into us from Christ.

²⁴ *Lawes*, V.53.3 (2:218.20–219.3).

whome sinne is. By the one measure all sinne is infinit, because he is Infinite whome sinne offendeth: for which cause there is one eternall punishment due in justice unto all sinners . . . He leaveth us not as Adam in the hands of our own wills att once indued with abilitie to stand of our owne accord. . . . *because that abilitie is altogether lost.*²⁵ [italics mine]

Hooker's conviction of the soul's complete unworthiness is wholly consistent with the usual reformed view. The problem of mediation is crucial. Conversely, the soul's fulfillment, happiness, and perfection are also, according to Hooker, infinite: "No good is infinite but only God: therefore he is our felicitie and blisse."²⁶ Salvation is nothing less than the bridging of the gulf between man's infinite wickedness and God's infinite goodness: "Then are we happie therefore when fully we enjoy God, as an object wherein the powers of our soules are satisfied even with everlasting delight: so that although we be men, yet by being unto God united we live as it were the life of God."²⁷

How is this complete union of man with God accomplished? How do men come to "the participation of divine nature?"²⁸ What constitutes the bridge and *how* is this mediation accomplished? Hooker's treatment of this problem of soteriological mediation is radically Christocentric, and in this respect he is a close follower of the theological approach adopted by Calvin. The soul's participation of the divine nature, according to Calvin, was objectively achieved in and through Christ's assumption of human nature in the Incarnation.²⁹ The mediation between man and God was possible *solely* by the God-man Christ.³⁰ For Hooker and Calvin both, the soul's participation in the divine nature was attained "by Christe alone."³¹ In *A Learned Discourse of Justification*, Hooker argues forcibly for the doctrine of salvation by Christ alone.³² In that sermon, he is intent on a demonstration of "how the founda-

²⁵ Dublin Fragments, *The Tenth Article touching predestination*, §31, FLE, 4:140.8–141.9.

²⁶ Lawes, I.11.2 (1:112.11–12).

²⁷ Lawes, I.11.2 (1:112.17–20).

²⁸ Lawes, V.56.7 (2:238.18). See John Booty's discussion of "The Concept of Participation" in FLE, 6(1):197–199.

²⁹ Inst., 2.12.1. Calvin speaks of the "insitio in Christum" as the indispensable condition for the reception of the grace that Christ's redemption has gained on our behalf. See François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of his Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), pp. 234–242.

³⁰ Wendel, *Calvin*, pp. 215–232; Inst., 2.12.1. Hooker, like Calvin, placed considerable emphasis on traditional Christological doctrine as defined by the four Ecumenical Councils of the ancient Church. Both divines also drew upon the patristic formulations of orthodox Christology to clarify various questions of ecclesiology and political theory in addition to those of soteriology.

³¹ Inst., §31; 151.9–153.15 and Calvin, Inst., 3.1.1: "As long as we are apart from Christ and separated from him, all that he has done and suffered for the salvation of the human race is useless and of no importance."

³² A *Learned Discourse of Justification, Workes, and how the Foundation of Faith is overthrown*, FLE, 5:105–169 (*Just.*). The discourse is a set of sermons on Habakkuk 1.4.

tion of faith is overthrowne³³ by the requirement of virtuous works to the attainment of justifying righteousness: “Salvation only by Christe [*solutus Christus*] is the true foundation whereupon indeed Christianitye standeth.”³⁴ This union of the soul with Christ is described as a “mysticall conjunction”:

Wee are therefore in God through Christ eternallie accordinge to that intent and purpose whereby wee were chosen to be made his in this present world before the world it selfe was made . . . Wee are in Christ because he knoweth and loveth us even as partes of him selfe. No man actuallie is in him but they in whome he actuallie is. For he which hath not the Sonne of God hath not life.³⁵

Our union with Christ, according to Hooker, is the wholly indispensable condition for our salvation. This immediate and “actuall incorporation” (*in situ in Christum*) is the foundational principle of orthodox reformed soteriology.³⁶

As Hooker observed in his tractate on “Grace and Free Will” in the *Dublin Fragments*, “In Grace there is nothing of soe great difficultie as to define after what manner and measure it worketh.”³⁷ The union may be viewed in two ways: “Participation is that mutuall inward hold which Christ hath of us and wee of him, in such sort that ech possesseth other by waie of speciall interest propertie and inherent copulation.”³⁸ The union of fallen humanity with Christ is viewed dialectically by Hooker in accord with the Chalcedonian Christological paradigm. On the one hand, there is union with Christ by virtue of God’s eternal decree. The soul is “in God through Christ eternallie accordinge to that intent and purpose whereby we were chosen to be made his in this present world before the world it selfe was made.”³⁹ On the other hand, “our beinge in Christ by eternall foreknowledge saveth us not without our actuall and reall adoption into the fellowship of his Sainctes in this present world.”⁴⁰ Hooker has here distinguished a twofold participation of grace. First, humanity is united to God through Christ beyond time:

God therefore lovinge eternallie his Sonne, he must needes eternallie in him have loved and preferred before all others them which are spiritual-

³³ *Just.*, §1; 105.1.

³⁴ *Just.*, §29; 149.20–22.

³⁵ *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:238.18; 239.8).

³⁶ *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:238.30). For Hooker this “mysticall conjunction” is a “real participation” of Christ and a “real adoption into the fellowship of his Saintes in this present world.”

³⁷ *FLE*, 4:111.32–33.

³⁸ *Lawes*, V.56.1 (2:234.29–31).

³⁹ *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:238.19–21); compare Calvin, *Inst.*, 3.25.5: “Of those whom God has chosen as his children it is not said that he elected them in themselves, but in his Christ.” For a discussion of the Christocentric character of Calvin’s view of predestination, see Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 275.

⁴⁰ *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:238.27–29).

lie sithence descended and spronge out of him. These were in God as in theire Savior and not as in theire creator onlie. It was the purpose of his *savinge* goodnes, his *savinge* wisdome and his *savinge* power which inclined it selfe towarde them.⁴¹

Yet, “no man actuallie is in him but they in whome he actuallie is.”⁴² Christ dwells in us in order that we might dwell in him. Thus Hooker emphasizes the simultaneous union both in heaven beyond the limits of time (*coram Deo*) as well as here and now (*coram hominibus*). This initial analysis of the “mutuall participation” between Christ and humanity reveals a tension between the realms of time and eternity which is characteristic of reformed soteriology.

This tension of realms is built up further in Hooker’s analysis of the so-called *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation. The communication of grace to men is marked by important distinctions. Salvation is achieved in and through the unity of Christ’s person, yet this unity is “participated” by the soul in clearly distinct modes:

But we saie our salvation is by Christ alone therefore howsoever or whatsoever we add unto Christe in the matter of salvation we overthrowe Christe. Our case were very hard if this argumente so univer-sally ment as it is proposed were sound and good. We ourselves do not teache Christe alone excluding our owne faith unto justefacion, Christe alone excluding our owne workes unto sanctification, Christe alone excluding the one or the other as unnecessary unto salvation.⁴³

The problem of soteriology for Hooker—as indeed for Reformation theology generally—was *how* salvation can be wrought by Christ alone and yet not result in paralyzing souls into total inaction. In his approach to this problem Hooker adheres closely to Calvin’s formulation of the distinct modes of grace.⁴⁴ Hooker and Calvin, both following Luther’s lead, make a sharp distinction between the righteousness of justification and that of sanctification. Thus, according to Hooker, “there are two kindes of Christian righteousness the one without us which we have by imputacion, the other in us which consisteth of faith hope charitie and other christian virtues . . . God gyveth us both the one Justice and the other, the one by accepting us for righteous in Christe, the other by workinge christian righteousnes in us.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Lawes*, V.56.6 (2:238.3–9).

⁴² *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:239.6–7).

⁴³ *Just.*, §31; 151.9–16.

⁴⁴ Compare *Just.*, §6; 112.26–113.4 and *Inst.*, 3.16.1.

⁴⁵ *Just.*, §21; 129.2–10. Hooker’s argument here is closely reminiscent of Luther’s account in *Two Kinds of Righteousness* (1520).

These two modes of participation in Christ derive from one and the same source. Both are means whereby *Christ alone* works the salvation of humanity. The two modes of righteousness are distinct, yet always bound together. According to Calvin, “justifying Grace is not separate from regeneration although these are distinct things.”⁴⁶ In Hooker’s formulation “wee participate Christ partelie by imputation, as when those things which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partlie by habituall and reall infusion, as when grace is inwardlie bestowed while we are on earth.”⁴⁷ “But we saie our salvationis by Christ alone therefore howsoever or whatsoever we add unto Christe in the matter of salvation we overthrowe Christe.”⁴⁸ These two modes of grace, i.e., imputed or justifying grace, and infused or sanctifying grace, must not be mixed or confused lest the “foundation of faith be overthrown.”⁴⁹ As with the distinction and unity of two natures of Christ as defined by the Chalcedonian paradigm, the affirmation of a “righteousness of works” does not contradict the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The two modes of righteousness are unified in their source yet remain clearly distinct in their operation.

Justifying righteousness is the logically prior mode of grace. Calvin defined it as the “principle of the whole doctrine of salvation and the foundation of all religion.”⁵⁰ It is a perfect righteousness, perfect because it is the righteousness of Christ himself. It is, however, extraneous or alien to the soul, and by no means can it be regarded as a spiritual quality or habit. Aquinas regarded *gratia justificans* as a *qualitas quaedam supernaturalis* which operates as the root and principle of good works.⁵¹ Hooker distinguishes his interpretation from the Thomist soteriology as enshrined in the decrees of the Council of Trent, on the grounds that the latter tends to a confusion of the two principal modes of grace:

This grace [i.e., justification] they will have to be applied by infusion; to the end that as the bodye is warm by the heate which is in the bodye, so the soule mighte be rightuous by the inherente grace, which grace

⁴⁶ *Inst.*, 4.11.11.

⁴⁷ *Lawes*, V.56.11 (2:243.4–7).

⁴⁸ *Just.*, §31; 151.9–11.

⁴⁹ *Just.*, §22; 131.9 ff.

⁵⁰ Sermon on Luke 1.5–10, in *Opera omnia quae supersunt in Corpus Reformatorum* (Brunswick, 1863–1900), vol. 46, p. 23, quoted by Wendel in *Calvin*, p. 256.

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae, q. 110, quoted by Hooker in *FLE*, 5:110.13. See also q. 113 “de justificatione.” In his commentary on this passage Egil Grislis points out the close similarity between Hooker’s and Philipp Melanchthon’s formulations of the doctrine in question. See *FLE*, 5:716, n. 110.13: “devyne spiritual qualitic”; *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck, Library of Christian Classics 19 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), pp. 86–87.

they make capable of increase: as the body maie be more and more warme, so the soule more and more justefied, accordinge as grace shalbe augmented, the augmentacion whereof is merited by good workes, as good workes are made meritorious by it, wherfore the firste receipte of grace is in their divinitye the firste justification, the increase thereof the seconde justification.⁵²

Over against the view that the righteousness of justification is itself “infused” as a habit of the soul, and therefore is both inherent in the soul and dynamic in its operation, Hooker upholds the standard interpretation of the reformers. On account of man’s total depravity, there is no capability whatever on the part of the soul to receive the righteousness of justification as a quality or *habitus*: “The righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own; therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithful; for by faith we are incorporated into him.”⁵³ For Hooker, as for Calvin, Luther, and the magisterial reformers generally, the principal controversy between the Church of Rome and her Protestant critics, hangs upon this soteriological application of the Chalcedonian definition. For the reformers, the righteousness whereby a soul is justified “before God” (*coram deo*) is perfect, alien, and wholly passive. It is “perfect” because it is the righteousness of Christ himself. “Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself.”⁵⁴ The righteousness of justification is altogether incapable of increase or decrease. It is alien because it does not inhere in the sinful soul, but is imputed to it as though it were perfectly righteous. It is passive insofar as men participate in it entirely by faith.

At one point Hooker refers to justification as “the external justice of Christ Jesus” distinguished from the “habitual justice” of sanctification.⁵⁵ The “external” character of the prior mode of grace is of crucial significance. In the imputed righteousness of Christ, the soul finds its unity and stability altogether outside itself, “in heaven” with Christ.⁵⁶ This is the so-called realm of faith

⁵² *Just.*, §5:110.24–111.6.

⁵³ *Just.*, §6; 112.22–26. Hooker continues:

Then although in ourselves we be altogether synfull and unrightuous, yett even the man which him self is ympious, full of inequity, full of synne, hym beinge found in Christe through faith, and having his synne in hatred through repentaunce, hym god beholdeth with a gratiouse eye, putteth awaie his syn by not ymputing it, taketh quite awaie the poniishemente due therunto by pardoneinge it, and accepteth hym in Jesus Christe as perfectly rightuous as if he had fullfilled all that is comauanded hym in the lawe, shall I saie more perfectly rightuous then if him self had fulfilled the whole lawe? (*FLE*, 5:112.26–113.4)

⁵⁴ *Just.*, §6; 113.6–8.

⁵⁵ *Just.*, §3; 129.26.

⁵⁶ *Just.*, §6; 109.8–9; 112.22–113.15.

which, for reformed soteriology, must be kept wholly distinct from the secondary or consequent realm of virtuous activity. To confuse the two realms or the two modes of grace is to overthrow the foundation of faith, just as confusion of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ undermines Christological orthodoxy.⁵⁷

Sanctifying righteousness, on the other hand, is defined according to the accepted formula of reformed doctrine as “inherent, but not perfecte.”⁵⁸ In an explicit appeal to the categories of Chalcedon, Hooker distinguishes the second mode of righteousness “as a thinge *in nature* different from the righteousnes of justification.”⁵⁹ It is by its nature imperfect, habitual, and infused as against the perfect, alien, and imputed character of the first mode. The grace of sanctification, or regeneration as it is sometimes called, is “Christ in us” as against the mode of “ourselves in Christ.”⁶⁰ This second mode of grace is inherent in that it is a gift of virtues, that is, habits of the soul which contribute to a progressive, incremental regeneration of the will: “the effects thereof are such actions as the Apostle doth call the fruits, the works, the operations of the Spirit.”⁶¹

Thus while the Christian is totally justified by the imputation to him of Christ’s perfect righteousness, at the same time he remains a sinner throughout his life—*simul justus et peccator* in Luther’s famous tag. The sinner, having been justified by faith, is nevertheless engaged in a dynamic process of becoming righteous. For Hooker the difficulty in the teaching of the Church of Rome as formulated at the Council of Trent was therefore “not that she requireth workes at their handes that wilbe saved: but that she attributeth unto workes a power of satisfying God for sin and a virtue to merite both grace here and in heaven glorye.”⁶² According to the Chalcedonian paradigm, the soul’s complete participation in the divine nature must by no means be confused with the continuing integrity of its own finite human nature. In this way the logic of soteriological union with Christ reflects the Christological paradigm.

Here we have the central structural feature of reformed soteriology. On the one hand, the Christian individual is *totally* righteous and, on the other, is simultaneously *becoming* righteous by degrees.⁶³ The soul exists simulta-

⁵⁷ *Just.*, §25; 135.20–136.22.

⁵⁸ *Just.*, §3; 109.11.

⁵⁹ *Just.*, §6; 113.18–19.

⁶⁰ *Lawes*, V.56.11 (2:243.4–9): “Thus we participate Christ partelic by imputation, as when those thinges which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partelic by habituall and reall infusion, as when grace is inwardlie bestowed while wee are on earth and afterwarde more fullie both our soules and bodies made like unto his in glorie.”

⁶¹ *Just.*, §6; 113.27–114.4.

⁶² *Just.*, §32; 153.16–19.

⁶³ *Lawes*, V.56.13 (2:244.11–25).

neously in two completely distinct worlds. No longer can justification be viewed as a progressive, incremental ascent from the imperfect realm of nature to the perfect realm of grace. The soul is rather present in both realms *at once*. By faith the believer is already in the eschatological realm of perfect righteousness, yet continues to exist in a “temporal” realm of dynamic righteousness. The Christian, by virtue of his simultaneous participation in these two modes of grace, participates in the two realms of incorruption and corruption, perfect justice and imperfect justice, imputed and infused grace. Following Chalcedonian logic, nothing can be more important than keeping these two modes distinct from each other, especially on account of their close association in the Christian person: “The want of exact distinguishing between these two waies and observing what they have in common what peculiar hath bene the cause of the greatest part of that confusion whereof Christianity at this daie laboureth.”⁶⁴

The two modes of passive and active righteousness are thus sharply distinguished, and yet continue unified and inseparable. They are united in that “Christe without any other associate finished all the partes of our redemption, and purchased salvation himself alone.”⁶⁵ These “partes” of redemption are distinct in the manner of their conveyance: “in the world to be called justefyed, sanctefied, after we have lefte the world to be receyved into glory. Christe in every of theis hath somewhat which he worketh alone.”⁶⁶ Thus the logic of Hooker’s soteriology follows the long-established dialectical pattern of Chalcedonian Christology. As is the case with Calvin, the doctrine of the so-called hypostatic union, i.e., the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, provides a useful hermeneutical instrument for the clarification of the complexities of reformed soteriology.⁶⁷

CHRISTOLOGY AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The logic of the Chalcedonian definition that governs the distinction and relation between the two realms along with their respective modes of power, the so-called “two regiments,” is extended even further by the reformers in their treatment of questions in the sphere of ecclesiology and political order.⁶⁸ There

⁶⁴ *Pride*, FLE, 5:313.19–23.

⁶⁵ *Just.*, §31; 152.16–18.

⁶⁶ *Just.*, §31; 152.20–23.

⁶⁷ See Wendel on Calvin’s employment of Christological arguments in his refutation of the mystical speculations of Andreas Osiander: *Calvin*, 235 ff.

⁶⁸ For an extended treatment of the concept of the “two regiments” in the thought of both Luther and Hooker, see James Cargill Thompson, *Studies in the Reformation: Luther to Hooker*, ed. C. W. Dugmore (London: Athlone Press, 1980).

was nothing particularly novel or original in this close association of the doctrine of power with the basic principles of the doctrine of grace and through soteriology back to Christology. On the contrary, the close link between Christology and ecclesiology was a commonplace of Reformation thought.⁶⁹

It has been said that the section of the *Lawes* dealing with Christology "is like a central tower" around which the whole argument of the treatise is constructed.⁷⁰ It is instructive to examine Hooker's doctrine of the Church through the categories of Chalcedonian Christology.⁷¹ The Church is, in its most fundamental nature, the body of Christ, who is its divine Head. The body, like the head, has two natures—one divine, the other human. While the Church is twofold, it is not two Churches, just as Christ, who is both divine and human, is neither two Christs, nor two persons. According to the definitions of the four great ecumenical Councils of the Early Church, Christ is truly God, perfectly human, indivisibly one individual person, and finally, his two natures remain altogether distinct within his indivisible person.⁷² As we have seen, the great Christological heresies of the early Church involved denial of one or other of these principles. Thus the Arians denied Christ's deity; the Apollinarians denied his full humanity; the Nestorians asserted that Christ was two persons; and the Eutychians confused the two natures in their affirmation of the unity of his person.⁷³

⁶⁹ See P. D. L. Avis, *The Doctrine of the Church in the Theology of the Reformers*, pp. 1, 36–44; F. Edward Cranz provides a clear and detailed exposition of the derivation of Luther's ecclesiology and political theory from his doctrine of justification in *An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law and Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 13 ff. I am indebted particularly to Cranz's researches for my understanding of the basic logic of Luther's position.

⁷⁰ Lionel Thornton, *Richard Hooker: A Study of his Theology* (London, 1924), p. 54. The centrality of Chalcedonian orthodoxy in Hooker's thought has been remarked by George W. Morrel in his article "Richard Hooker, Theologian of the English Reformation," *Christianity Today* 10 (September, 1966): 8–10.

⁷¹ It was, of course, commonplace to supply the analogy of Christology to the interpretation of the Sacraments. For instance, see Calvin's well-known criticism of the Lutheran sacramental teaching as a tendency towards Eutychianism, viz., a failure to distinguish between Christ's human and divine natures, "and insisting only on the unity of person, he converted God into man and man into God. What madness, then, is it to confound heaven with earth, sooner than not withdraw the body of Christ from its heavenly sanctuary" (*Inst.*, 4.17.30). Luther employs a Christological paradigm to explain the relation of Faith and Law in his *Commentary of Galatians* (1531), *WA*, XL (1) 427, 1: "Ut si dico de Christo homine, tamen duae naturae distinctae: . . . Dico: humanitas non est divinitas et tamen homo est Deus. Sic lex non est fides. In concreto et composito kommen sie zusammen." For a discussion of Luther's use of the Christological paradigm, see F. E. Cranz, pp. 63, 93; for Calvin's Christocentrism see Wendel, *passim*, especially p. 311. See also E. D. Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), pp. 18–74. Compare Hooker, *Lawes*, V.67.10 (2:337.14–338.5).

⁷² *Lawes*, V.54.10 (2:226.22–227.18).

⁷³ See p. 69 above for Hooker's summary of Chalcedonian doctrine. See also *Lawes*, V.42.13 (2:177.10–178.3).

Following the lead of the magisterial reformers, Hooker upholds the Chalcedonian condemnation of these Christological heresies.⁷⁴ He extends the Chalcedonian paradigm to his understanding of the relation between the “mystical” and “politique” bodies of the Church. The Church, like Christ her head, is an invisible, supernatural, divine community. As the mystical communion of saints, the totality of the elect “foreknown and chosen before all worlds,” it is altogether hidden. Like God and Christ, the church mystical is an object of faith.⁷⁵ Its essential divinity consists in being known only to God. In this divine aspect, the Church is subject solely to the operation of supernatural law and is apprehensible to the eye of faith alone.⁷⁶

On the other hand, the Church, like Christ, has become incarnate. In this other aspect, the Church is a visible, human, and political association. The external body of believers, like Christ the Son of Man, is not hidden, but manifest. As distinct from Christ’s body as God sees it, the Church is defined as it appears to us. The Church in this external aspect is not ordered by the rule of the gospel, but rather by positive human laws deduced from the law of nature. Just as God chooses to reveal himself in human form, so also the Church is manifest as a human institution. Hooker formulates this concept succinctly: “Grace hath use of nature.”⁷⁷

There are thus two natures ascribed to the Church analogous to the two natures of Christ. Discourse concerning the Church, just as in the doctrine of Christology, must observe certain rules as to the manner of the relation between the “mystical” and “politique” bodies, that is to say, how they are connected and how they are distinguished. Just as in the discourse concerning the manner of the relation between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ there was considerable room for confusion and disagreement, so also in the doctrine of the Church. As Hooker observes at the outset of his Christological inquiry, “there is no union of God with man without that meane betwene both which is both.”⁷⁸ Similarly, in relation to the doctrine of the Church, there is no participation by men in the divine nature without membership in Christ, and hence participation in his body the Church. This body may be viewed in two fashions: first, as it is in Christ and known in

⁷⁴ Compare Calvin, *Inst.*, 2:14.1–8. See B. C. Milner, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970).

⁷⁵ Calvin, *Inst.*, 4.1.4.

⁷⁶ *Lawes*, III.1.2 (1:194.27–32): “That Church of Christ which we properly terme his body mystical, can be but one, neither can that one bee sensiblie discerned by any man, in as much as the partes thereof are some in heaven alreadie with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their naturall persons bee visible) we doe not discerne under this propertie, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body.”

⁷⁷ *Lawes*, III.8.6 (1:223.29).

⁷⁸ *Lawes*, V.50.3 (2:208.23–24).

God, i.e., mystically; and second, as it is discerned externally in the world, and known to men, i.e., institutionally. The complexity of Hooker's ecclesiology unfolds when the nature of the connections between these two aspects of the Church is discussed. In its logical complexity the problem of ecclesiology mirrors Hooker's Christological discourse.

First we must examine the character of the union between the two natures of the Church to see clearly how an association that is on the one hand invisible, supernatural, mystical—in short divine—and on the other hand visible, natural, secular, or human, can be *simultaneously*, and thus indivisibly, one Church. Second, we must consider the manner in which these distinctions are preserved within a primary unity. Just as Christ is a single, undivided person while being both God and man, so also his body the Church is fundamentally one Church existing in two realms: "Our being in Christ by eternall foreknowledge saveth us not without our actuall and reall adoption into the fellowship of his sainctes in this present world."⁷⁹ In this Hooker merely follows the standard formulations of reformed ecclesiological orthodoxy. Christians must have recourse to visible means of grace, as the Scripture reveals.⁸⁰ Thus when Calvin's intention is to speak of the *visible Church*, "let us learn if only from her title of mother," he says, "how much the knowledge of this same is useful, and indeed necessary . . . outside the bosom of the Church we can hope for no remission of sins nor any salvation."⁸¹

Hooker's discussion of the visible means of grace rests upon the "necessitie of Sacraments unto the participation of Christ."⁸² Thus membership in the "mysticall bodie" of the Church is tied by personal union to participation in the external, visible institution of the Church. In parallel fashion, the God-head is revealed to man through the mediation of Christ's assumption of the human nature. There is thus, by analogy, an *ecclesiological* "communication of idioms" between the mystical and institutional Churches, just as in Christology between the human and divine natures:⁸³

A kinde of mutuall commutation there is whereby those concrete names *God* and *Man* when wee speake of Christ doe take interchangable one an others roome, so that *for truth of speech* it skilleth not whether wee saie that the Sonne of God hath created the world and the

⁷⁹ *Lawes*, V.56.7 (2:238.27–29).

⁸⁰ *Lawes*, V.56.7.

⁸¹ Calvin, *Inst.*, 4.1.4.

⁸² *Lawes*, V.57.1 (2:244.26).

⁸³ See *Lawes*, V.53.4 (2:219.3–220.17) for Hooker's exposition of the "mutuall commutation" of the divine and human natures. He relies upon John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, 3.4; PG 94:1000. See *FLE*, 6: Comm., 2:219.k.

Sonne of man by his death hath saved it, or els that the Sonne of man did create and the Sonne of God die to save the world. Howbeit as oft as wee attribute to God what the manhood of Christ claymeth, or to man what his deitie hath right unto, wee understand by the name of God and the name of man neither the one nor the other nature, but *the whole person* of Christ in whome both natures are. [italics mine]⁸⁴

In the Christological controversies of the early Church, Hooker observes that stress upon the union of the two natures led in time to their confusion or conflation: “So Eutyches of sound belief as touchinge their true *personall* copulation became unsound by denyinge the difference which still continueth betwene the one and the other nature.”⁸⁵ It was thus paramount to orthodox Christology to “keepe warilie a middle corse shunninge both the distraction of persons wherein Nestorius went awrie, and also this later confusion of natures which deceived Eutyches.”⁸⁶ By analogy, in the doctrine of the Church the mystical and external aspects of the Church’s life must be kept distinct so that “there is no abolishment of naturall properties apperteininge to either substance, no transition or transmigration thereof out of one substance into an other, finallie no such mutuall infusion as reallie causeth the same naturall operations or properties to be made common unto both substances.”⁸⁷ Although membership in the mystical body is attainable only *through* the visible means, it is essential to the preservation of fundamental doctrinal orthodoxy that there be no confusion or mixture of the sign with the signified, of the finite with the infinite, of the human with the divine. The natural operations and properties that belong to the mystical or spiritual nature of the Church must not be infused into the life of the external, political community of the Church.

Finally, there is a communion of idioms between the two natures of the Church whereby the human positive laws governing the external polity have the force of divine ordinance:

So that *Lawes* humane must be made according to the generall *Lawes* of nature, and without contradiction unto any positive law in scripture. Otherwise they are ill made. Unto *Lawes* thus made and received by a whole Church, they which live within the bosome of that Church, must

⁸⁴ *Lawes*, V.53.4 (2:219.8–18).

⁸⁵ *Lawes*, V.52.4 (2:215.31–216.1).

⁸⁶ *Lawes*, V.52.4; See also Calvin, *Inst.*, 4.17.30; 2.14.2. In *Calvin’s Catholic Christology*, E. D. Willis argues that Calvin was intentionally *unoriginal* in his Christology (p. 63) and that his aim was to be faithful above all to the orthodoxy of the Christological definition of the Council of Chalcedon (p. 66). See also Joseph N. Tylenda, “Calvin’s Understanding of the Communication of Properties,” in *An Elaboration of the Theology of Calvin*, vol. 8, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 148–159.

⁸⁷ *Lawes*, V.53.1 (2:216.23–27).

not thinke it a matter indifferent either to yeeld or not to yeeld obedience . . . It doth not stand with the duty which we owe to our heavenly father, that to ordinances of our mother the Church we should shew ourselves disobedient. Let us not say we keepe the commandements of the one, when we breake the law of the other: *For unlesse we observe both, we obey neither.*⁸⁸

Thus for Hooker there is therefore an explicitly divine basis for the human, positive laws and external institutions of the Church. These laws are *by nature* wholly distinct from the divine, revealed law, but are nonetheless divine in a mediated fashion according to the Chalcedonian paradigm: "Yea that which is more, the *Lawes* thus made God himselfe doth in such sort authorize, that to despise them is to despise in them him."⁸⁹ The proper distinction of the two aspects of the Church is not such as to enforce a complete and unbridgeable separation of the external-human authority from the mystical-divine authority. Rather, by the "grace of union," the distinction is preserved while, at the same time, divine authority is mediated *through* human means. As in the case of Hooker's Christology, as regards the union of the two natures in Christ, "of both natures there is a *cooperation* often, an *association* alwayes, but never any mutual *participation* whereby the properties of the one are infused into the other."⁹⁰ That is to say, Christ is both God and man without the confusion of Godhead with humanity. Thus also, the Church is a "mysticall" and "politique" body without the confusion of the former with the latter. The authority exercised by Christ in the "body mysticall" is unmediated; the authority he exerts over the "body politique" is mediated by external and visible representatives. Out of these considerations perhaps we can begin to see how the reformers' strict adherence to Chalcedonian Christological orthodoxy shapes in a fundamental way their treatment of both the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the Church.

⁸⁸ *Lawes*, III.9.2, 3 (1:237.27–238.7).

⁸⁹ *Lawes*, III.9.3 (1:238.11–13). See also (1:239.11–12).

⁹⁰ *Lawes*, V.53.3 (2:218.30–219.3).

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